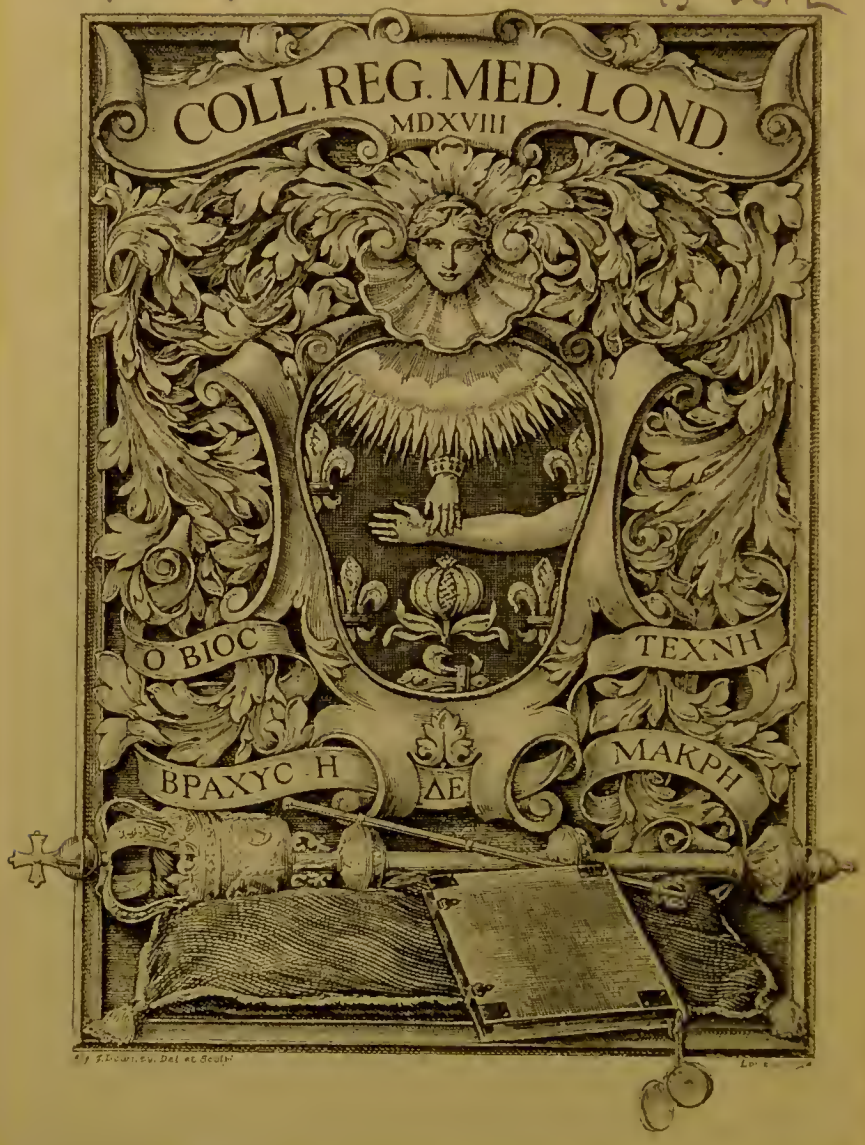
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James Wilson

Memoirs
of
James Wilson Esq.re
of
Woodville.



Woodville

London
James Nisbet & Co.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF JAMES WILSON, ESQ.

F.R.S.E., M.W.S.

OF WOODVILLE.

BY

JAMES HAMILTON, D.D., F.L.S.

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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH scarcely claiming to be a contribution to what is commonly called religious biography, it is hoped that there is room for a volume which tries to delineate, however imperfectly, a Christian gentleman, and which shews how honourably and usefully an accomplished mind may fill up a life of leisure. It may possibly strike some readers that the style is neither so solemn nor so stately as befits a tribute to departed worth. If so, our apology must be, that the book is neither an elegy nor a funeral oration. It is an attempt to reproduce, as nearly as possible in its own tone, a life which is now continued and ennobled elsewhere,

and of which the aspect, as it met our eye, was very bright and cheerful and beneficent.

Many of Mr Wilson's friends have helped us in this effort, and for valuable information we tender our best acknowledgments to His Grace the Duke of Argyll, and the Lady Emma Campbell; to the Hon. B. F. Primrose; to Sir John M'Neill; to P. S. Selby, Esq., Dr R. K. Greville, Professor Balfour, Adam White, Esq., and D. Crole, Esq.; to John Russell, Esq., Treasurer of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; to Adam Black, Esq., M.P., to John Murray, Esq., John Blackwood, Esq., and W. P. Kennedy, Esq. Besides all the assistance derived from his own beautiful and comprehensive sketch of Mr Wilson's character, we are under great obligations to Professor George Wilson for his personal communications; and we would especially commemorate the kindness of Sir William Jardine, who placed at our disposal a collection of seventy-two letters, which scientific readers will

only regret that we have not used more freely. Nor can we forbear to add, that the book owes its existence and its best materials to the affectionate zeal with which the compiler has been aided by the members of Mr Wilson's family.

48 Euston Square,
April 16, 1859.

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CHAPTER I.

Early Years.

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

WORDSWORTH.

"There are so many ways of writing biography, that it is vain to inquire which is the best. One canon, however, may be safely insisted on, namely, That the record of a man's career should correspond in tone to the character of him whose life it chronicles."—DR GEORGE WILSON.

SOME thirty years ago, an English tourist was standing on the Castle Rock, with a lank, keen-visaged Scotchman for interpreter and guide.

"Now, my good friend," said the Southron, "you have talked quite enough about your native town. Pray, forget Paisley for a moment, and let us look at Edinburgh."

"It's no that easy to forget Paisley when ye look at Embro'," replied the offended *cicerone*. "Seest 'ou?" and he pointed towards the University buildings; "that's Embro' College, where they come from England and a' pairts to learn to be doctors, and chancellors, and members o' Parliament; and it has the cleverest men in the three kingdoms for its professors: but far the cleverest of them a' is ane John Wilson, and *he's* a Paisley man. And seest 'ou?" pointing to a distant spire; "yon's the steeple o' North Leith. It's the best stipend in Scotland, and at this present it's allowed to have the best preacher in Scotland for its minister. Ye must have heard tell of the Rev. James Buchanan; but ye may have forgotten

that he 's a Paisley man. And seest 'ou that kirk wi' the doom on 't? That 's St George's, where a' the gentry attend for the sake of the singing; and I'se warrant ye 'll no hear the like o' the precentor in a' England. They ca' him R. A. Smith, and he 's a Paisley man. And seest 'ou where a' thae coaches are waiting to start? That 's the Register Office. Ye may say it 's the key-stane o' the kingdom; for lairds and lands a' hing by it. But though it 's the place where dukes and earls keep their titles, and the King himself keeps his papers, every day, when the clerks gae hame, and the door is steekit, the entire place is left in charge of an auld wife, and she 's a Paisley woman."

Without vouching for the accuracy of this last particular, and whilst begging a little indulgence for the vanity of our fellow-townsman, we must claim for Paisley the rights which its neighbour cities are not sufficiently ready to recognise. But the town which has numbered amongst its ministers Boyd of Trochrig and Archbishop Adamson, Principal Smeton and President Witherspoon; which introduced to professional life Watt, the laborious compiler of the "Bibliotheca Britannica;" and which from amongst her sons contributed to natural science Wilson, the American ornithologist; to sculpture, John Henning; and to poetry, Robert Tannahill and the author of "The Isle of Palms,"—need not be ashamed, but

may speak in the gate to all gainsayers. In the latter half of last century, when the wages of its weavers were good; when they had time to cultivate their little gardens, and grow such polyanthuses and tulips as nowhere else were seen; when they had time to read the Bible and pray with their families every day, and could at leisure hours get through such books as "Henry's Exposition" and the "Universal History," we need not wonder that Rowland Hill should have pronounced Paisley "the Paradise of Scotland." When we add that—partly a result of the disputatious humour inherent in Scotchmen, partly a result of a gregarious or social tendency characteristic of the place—a high degree of intelligence, edged with a peculiar wit, distinguished the inhabitants, the reader will congratulate Mr Wilson on being able to boast such a birthplace, and will only regret that by a removal elsewhere he forfeited its advantages in the second year of his age.*

The native of a country where birthdays are seldom celebrated, the subject of this biography could never tell

* It was the calamity of Mr Wilson's biographer to quit "the Paradise of Scotland" at an age still more tender: it is therefore little that he can add in the way of personal reminiscence. But in the days of his youth he had a venerable relative (proprietor of the oldest spinning-mill in Scotland) who used to say, that when he was young he knew almost every "reeking lum" in Paisley, and that there was a time every morning, when passing almost any door, you were sure to hear the voice of prayer or of psalms.

which was the day when first he saw the light; and as it was Paisley, in the month of November, the likelihood is that there was not much light to be seen. He was born in the year 1795.

His father, a manufacturer in extensive business, and a banker, died before his youngest boy could be conscious of the loss; and, with her numerous sons and daughters, Mrs Wilson removed to Edinburgh, where so many Scottish families, in their day of desolation, seek a second home. Here, with comfortable resources, and with God's blessing on her kind and sensible administration, she was permitted to see her children grow up; and, what seldom happens in our country, twice over did a son marry without migrating from under the maternal roof. Her house, No. 53 Queen Street, was the residence of her youngest son till the time of his own marriage.

Mrs Wilson's maiden name was Margaret Sym. Her brother Robert, the "Timothy Tickler" of the "Noctes," is still an outstanding personage in every Edinburgh memory. At an early hour of any morning his meagre lofty figure, like a peripatetic palm, after eighty summers still retaining its six feet four of altitude, and surmounted by a splendid silvery crown, might be descried by any one who was soon enough astir, on its journey from the old town to Trinity, or returning from its quotidian plunge in the sparkling sea. But although advancing years at

last deprived him of this luxury, they could not make him effeminate. He had reached his ninety-fourth year before he had ever breakfasted in bed, and the first day on which he did it was his last of life. This kind, methodical, and sprightly uncle was a favourite with his nephews, and went far to supply a father's place; nor was any one of them a more welcome visitant at 20 George Square than the youngest of the Queen Street band; for alike in his graver and his gayer moods, the delicate sympathy and merry enchantments of his congenial kinsman gladdened the heart of the dear old man.

We have now told who was the father of the subject of this memoir, who were his mother and his uncle, and in the progress of the narrative we hope to shew who he was himself; but in all the dictionary of biographical synonyms there is no other instance where it is so needful to premise who he was *not*. Knowing him to be a naturalist, many of our friends confound him with another Wilson, whose admirable and original researches amongst the feathered natives of the United States, followed out by Prince Lucien Bonaparte, are still a standard work on American ornithology; but although a poet and an ornithologist, and withal a native of Paisley, our Mr Wilson never was a weaver, nor was he ever in the United States, and his Christian name was not Alexander. Nor can he even claim all the honours which the catalogues have

heaped on the industrious head of plain James Wilson. Although he travelled on the Continent in the self-same years, he is not the author of James Wilson's "Continental Tour in 1816–18;" although a poet and a Paisley man, he is not the author of "Silent Love," by James Wilson "the Paisley poet;" lawyer though he was, he did not sit in the first Congress, and he had no hand in drawing up the American constitution; aquatic as were many of his tastes, he did not compile a manual on "The Water Cure;" and Scotchman though he was, he never published on statistics, nor did he edit a London newspaper. What is still more worthy of observation, although their mental features somewhat corresponded, and their affection for each other was intense, he was a distinct personality from his own brother John. One day, many years ago, at the dinner-table at Ardencaple the conversation came to turn on *Blackwood's Magazine*, which, with its merry mischief, was then vexing or diverting all the world. "Has Professor Wilson any brothers?" exclaimed a guest; but before Lord John Campbell could introduce the quiet gentleman opposite, with a face of impenetrable solidity, James Wilson, turning to the interrogator, made answer for himself. "Oh yes, he has several brothers. But, as you know always happens in such cases, all the brothers are idiots! However, I submit to the laws of nature."

With these laws our friend had little cause of quarrel. And now, asking pardon for bestowing on such particulars the space which, in regular biographies, is usually devoted to a genealogical table, we proceed with our narrative.

The books given to children are like the flies with which an angler tries the stream. Few are so dull or sulky as to refuse every bait; but so diverse has the wise Creator made the turn or tendency of different people, that the fisher of men or the teacher of youth, whose hooks have all the self-same mounting, will fail to "raise" some of the most valuable fishes. Fortunately for himself and his fellow-creatures our little orphan was caught betimes. When only three years of age a kind friend presented him with a book called "The Three Hundred Animals." It was the very food for which his hungry soul had appetite. He never wearied gazing on its pictures of the elephant and lion, and its monkeys manifold; and as soon as he could read with sufficient ease, he devoured its descriptive letterpress. The barb thus busked was killing, and even before he knew the name, he was carried captive for the rest of life by natural history.

In the fauna of the Pentlands, sheep are doubtfully indigenous, and in Edinburgh itself the mammalia of most frequent occurrence are mice and rats; but for the other great divisions of natural science no European capital is so favourably situated. With a delightfully variegated

flora, it exhibits a corresponding diversity of insect forms; and whilst woods and waters are populous with birds of every size, from the wren at Bonally to the gannet on the Bass, it will be long before the marine zoologist exhausts his aquarium in the Frith—it will be long before the cabinets at Craigleith and Burdiehouse have disclosed to the palæontologist all the relics preserved on their shelves of stone. For botany and geology James Wilson never conceived any particular affection; but from earliest childhood the whole of animated nature found entrance to his soul, and acquired new vitality and significance there. Indeed, it was the *life* that is in them and around them which formed his great attraction to the lower creatures. Some naturalists are mere collectors. They prefer the bird in the hand to any number in the bush, and would rather contemplate a stuffed eagle inside their glass-fronted cupboard than watch the king of birds as, above the peaks of Atlas, he "cleaves the adverse storm, and cuffs it with his wings;" and, like numismatologists, they go on adding cone to cone and carabus to carabus, very forgetful of the living history of which they have there the medal and memorial. Others of a nobler type are mere anatomists. Intent on structure, they would not grudge the industrious years which Lyonnet devoted to the nerves and muscles of a grub, and to their piercing eye a chimpanzee or peer of Parliament is little better than a skeleton with a ticket-of-

leave—a preparation still walking about in native fur or exotic ermine. Our friend never became a great proficient in comparative anatomy, and his collecting originated in the desire to possess continually at hand mementoes of the creatures which he had learned to love elsewhere. On the summer evenings, when escaped from the High School, or on the bright and ample holiday when Roslin or Habbie's How was the delectable mountain of his pilgrimage, and when his quiet gentle spirit had seen the sights and heard the sounds unsurmised by noisier comrades, he was glad to carry home a keepsake from his own private carnival. The stuffed birds and rows of beetles which he began to store up in his little sanctuary at Queen Street, to Professor Jameson and the initiated few would be "specimens," to the housemaid and the irreverent many they would be "rubbish," but to the youthful compiler they were symbols and dear memorials. Among the whistling blasts of October they brought back the days of June, and they made mid-winter balmy. That corn-craik recalled a cloudless gloaming, and, caught as it was on Arthur's Seat, that Artaxerxes butterfly was still surrounded with the whole panorama from Ben Lomond to Berwick Law, whilst rosy reminiscences flitted past from bees and burnet-moths with wings now motionless. "Stolen waters are sweet," and such a collection is a magical cup which, dry to the stranger, still overflows to the owner.

As we have said, life and living things had the chief attraction for our youthful naturalist. Sir John M'Neill, the distinguished diplomatist, who subsequently married his sister, was one of his earlier companions. "My acquaintance with him," writes Sir John, "commenced in 1810. He was then at college, and fully occupied with natural history—with entomology especially; although Professor Jameson seemed desirous to direct his attention to his own favourite science. By Jameson he was led for a time to the study of mineralogy and geology, and got involved in the discussion then warmly carried on between Wernerian and Huttonian theorists. In this controversy he took with Jameson the side of Werner, and for a time was rather keenly interested; but to me and his other friends it was obvious that his heart was still given to zoology; and this bias was shortly after confirmed by his intercourse with poor Leach,* from which time forward I do not believe he ever deviated into any other path. He

* William Elford Leach, born at Plymouth in 1790, was brought up to the medical profession; but the same zeal for natural history which drew Mr Wilson aside from law, diverted Leach from physic. In 1813 he obtained an appointment in the Zoological Department of the British Museum; but in 1821, through a failure of health both mental and bodily, he was obliged to resign his curatorship. He went to Italy, and died there of cholera in August 1836. Besides editing the *Zoological Miscellany*, he was the author of many papers in the "Linnæan Transactions," and by his researches on insects, crustaceans, &c., obtained a considerable name amongst naturalists. Amongst the few zoologists to be

became a very diligent collector of insects, and seemed at all times to be more interested in observing their habits and studying their characters, so to speak, than in ascertaining and classifying their external distinctives. I state this from personal observation, for I was not unfrequently the companion of his entomological rambles, or 'beetle-hunts,' as I used to call them."

Nor was it merely the life that was in them, but the great wide life which was over and around them, so abundant and so beautiful. To James Wilson was given this rare perception—a poet's intuition rendered still more exquisite by "a natural piety." Even before the bright hopes of the Christian revelation had lit up his personal future, the surrounding scene was irradiated by the Divine presence; and although there might sometimes be too much of pantheistic vagueness in the recollection, it often kindled up into a consciousness which warmed his heart and filled his eyes. For rough and athletic sports he had no strength, for boisterous festivities no turn: it was therefore his great delight to hie away to the sea-shore or the mountain side, and court those companionships which

found in Edinburgh in Mr Wilson's early days, the society of one so ardent was a great acquisition; but his rapid and impetuous ways were not in unison with Mr Wilson's orderly and painstaking disposition. Speaking of Leach's letters, he says in a note to Sir W. Jardine, "He always wrote like a man standing on one leg, and in a hurry to be done."

entailed no fatigue, and left no compunction. Nor did it greatly matter in what embodiment the visitation came. The first swallow—a bee coaxed forth by early warmth—a flight of aërial passengers on their clangorous way through the windy clouds—a rainbow, and above all things a sunset, would surcharge his spirit with irrepressible emotion, and, if it did not lift him off this earthly clod altogether, it sent him home with heart elate, and full of unutterable musings. During those first years, it was a struggle between the poet and the naturalist; and although his early rhymes have perished, we need them not to assure us that the fellow-countryman of Thomson and Grahame could have added a worthy lay to "The Seasons" and "The Birds of Scotland."

Although the more practical element at last prevailed, there always remained a poetical tincture in Mr Wilson's science. Placed in circumstances which made no profession absolutely imperative, the recreation of his boyhood became increasingly the labour of his love; and whilst coming more and more to value exactitude and method, the delightful associations of those ardent days continued to the last, and, even in the midst of the severest technicalities, rendered it impossible for him to become a scientific Dryasdust.

Mild, gentle, and affectionate as were James Wilson's earlier years, probably no one surmised what a "fountain

sealed" of sublime and tender feeling that quiet nature was. In our own youth we remember being despatched on an embassy to Edinburgh by our Glasgow fellow-students. Our mission was to the late Lord Cockburn, then His Majesty's Solicitor-general, and withal our Lord Rector; and our errand was to bring him through to give a casting-vote in his own behalf, so that he might be re-elected to a third year of office. To the staunch old Reformer this proposal was too like self-election to be altogether palatable; but at last he agreed to do it: and when the interview ended, as he stood on the steps of his house in Charlotte Square, the sunbeams glancing on the polished cupola of that hatless cranium which held more shrewdness, wit, and eloquence than any head in Edinburgh, we remember how he said, "Well, I suppose I must do it, and be mortally quizzed for the rest of my days. However, I shall not go about the bush. I shan't say, 'I give my vote for the present Lord Rector,' or, 'I give my vote for the Solicitor-general.' But the Principal will say, 'My lord, for whom do you vote?' and I shall reply, 'Principal Macfarlan, I vote for myself'"—a promise which he fulfilled most literally. This fear of being "quizzed" is an affection pre-eminently Scottish. Our Irish neighbours live in an atmosphere of badinage and repartee, and John Bull pays *Punch* a handsome salary for quizzing him; but north of the Tweed we do not like it. In a battle betwixt cat and

dog a water-engine is an ungenerous piece of ordnance, owing to the greater sensitiveness of the feline constitution; and many a lion-heart around the Grampians which stands fire very well cannot stand fun. This dread of ridicule has many advantages. It snubs a good deal of pedantry, and it keeps back a large amount of maudlin sentiment; but it is to be feared that it also damps a good deal of generous aspiration, and occasionally drives genius in upon itself. Nor was the hero of our tale entirely superior to the national infirmity. All the rather because he was so exquisitely endowed with the sense of the ridiculous, did he deprecate supplying personal illustrations; and, through fear of the banter they might excite, he kept to himself many of the noblest and finest things in his nature. Lest he might be laughed at as another Icarus, although he had very good wings of his own, he forbore to fly; and, in dread of that imperfect sympathy which soon degenerates into perfect derision, he arrested the pathetic or eloquent utterance when already struggling to his lips, and was content to dwell in silence. Or if such utterance did escape, he covered his retreat by quizzing himself. When a boy, a playmate remembers that in a moment of good-nature or vanity, he one evening shewed his companions the press which contained his cherished collections. Of course, they greatly admired the museum; but before there was time for any one to

nickname him the showman or the little philosopher, or jeer at his favourites, he held the candle so near as to burn the tails of some of the birds. And by some such suicidal stratagem it was his wont to disarm the sardonic furies. A lady remembers his telling at Inverary Castle, late in life, the story of a dog which, in leaping a fence, had spiked itself; and as he described their sitting up over-night with the poor animal, and its pitiful appealing looks to its different friends, and its gradual subsidence into the arms of death, the human touches which he threw in were beginning to be too much for his tender-hearted auditors, when the arch tone in which he ended, "It was very affecting," compelled every one to laugh just at the moment they were beginning to cry. Of this inverting of the stylus, by which he so far cancels the effect of a powerful passage, his works contain innumerable instances. In order to escape the reproach of romance or sentimentalism, he singed the tail; but when it is the plumage of an ibis or a bird of paradise, we regret the sacrifice.

With all the Latin and Greek which could be acquired at school and college, and with a facility and elegance in writing English which seemed to be inherent in his family, it was time that the youth should choose a profession; and, we suspect, with a very languid preference, he chose the law—in Edinburgh, the natural

alternative of one who had no wish to be either a doctor or a minister. He was about eighteen years of age when he entered the office of Messrs Mackenzie & Monypenny, and commenced the usual training of a prospective Writer to the Signet.

But shortly before this he had joined a more congenial copartnership. In 1808, Professor Jameson had succeeded in associating with himself a few ardent cultivators of the natural sciences, and founded the Wernerian Society. Its members were not numerous, but many of them were men of high attainment. A few of them were botanists, such as the venerable Dr William Wright, of Jamaica, great in quassia and cinchona; Hopkirk of Dalbeth, the author of "Flora Glottiana," one of the first attempts in Scotland to furnish a guide to the local explorer; and Patrick Neill, whose proof-sheets used to be a luxury to the scientific author, and whose horticultural zeal made him a benefactor to his country. The zoologists were few; but after the type of the founder, himself a devoted pupil of the mighty Werner, the mineralogists made a powerful muster; the most ardent and assiduous being the Rev. Dr Macknight, the most accurate and masterly Dr Thomas Thomson, whose gruff, dry lectures and clumsy demonstrations in chemistry still betokened an autocratic ascendency, and crowded his class-room with students who are now among the wealthiest manufacturers

of Glasgow, and the most successful pharmacologists of the world. Into this select assembly James Wilson was admitted on the 11th of April 1812; and the election of a member so youthful shews the impression which he had already made on his friend and instructor, Professor Jameson. The meetings were then conducted with a very unassuming simplicity. They were held in the Professor's private residence, and the members sat round a long table. On the 25th of March 1815, Mr Wilson read his first communication. It was a description of what he believed to be a new species of water ouzel, to which he had given the name *Aquatilis undulatus*. But although the assembly was never very numerous, it would almost appear to have been too formidable an audience for his retiring temperament; at least, his next communications, on the "Cirl Bunting," and the "Falconidæ," are reported as having been read by Professor Jameson or the secretary.

Thus, from a mildly playful, affectionate childhood, James Wilson grew up to man. And the manner of man he was will be best understood from the following contemporary sketch, which we owe to the pen of the late Mr J. G. Lockhart:—

"I dined with Professor Jameson yesterday, with a small party of his most distinguished pupils. Among these there was one whom the Professor particularly introduced me to, a Mr James Wilson, brother to the poet.

This young gentleman follows the profession of a Writer to the Signet (which, as I have told you, is the name for the highest class of attorneys in Edinburgh), but forms, as Mr Jameson assured me, a brilliant exception to the neglect with which matters of science are commonly treated by the members of the profession. He is very young, many years junior to his more celebrated brother, and no casual observer would suspect them to be of the same family. I have already described to you the exterior of the poet. James is a thin, pale, slender, contemplative-looking person, with hair of rather a dark colour, and extremely short-sighted. In his manners, also, he is as different as possible from his brother; his voice is low, and his whole demeanour as still as can be imagined. In conversation, he attempts no kind of display, but seems to possess a very peculiar vein of dry humour, which renders him extremely diverting. Notwithstanding all these differences, however, I could easily trace a great similarity in the construction of the bones of the two faces; and, indeed, there is nothing more easy to imagine than that, with much of the same original powers and propensities, some casual enough circumstances may have been sufficient to decide that the one of the brothers should be a poet and the other a naturalist. The parts of the science of which Mr James Wilson is fondest, are ornithology and entomology—studies so delightful to every true lover of

nature, that I suspect they are, in some measure, familiar to every poet who excels in depicting the manifestations, and in tracing the spirit of beauty in the external universe. Professor Jameson, indeed, informed me that his young friend is, in truth, no less a poet than a naturalist, and has already published several little pieces of exquisite beauty, although he has not ventured to give his name along with them.

"I have never, indeed, met with any man who seemed to possess a greater power of illustrating subjects of natural history by quotations from writers of all kinds, and in particular from the poets. Milton and Wordsworth, above all, he appears to have completely by heart; and it was wonderfully delightful to me to hear matters which are commonly discussed in the driest of all possible methods, treated of in so graceful a manner by one who is so much skilled in them. Nothing could be more refreshing than to hear some minute details about birds and insects, interrupted and illuminated by a fragment of grand melancholy music from the 'Paradise Lost,' or the 'Excursion.'" *

* Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk (1819), pp. 256–259.

CHAPTER II.

A Continental Tour.

"Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? Should I not contemn
All objects, if compared with these?
A tide of suffering, rather than forego and stem
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?"

—Lord Byron.

"The things to be seen and observed are: the courts of princes, ... armouries, arsenals, magazines, exchanges, burses, warehouses; exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like; comedies, such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort. As for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not to be put in mind of them; yet they are not to be neglected. For quarrels, they are with care and discretion to be avoided."—Lord Bacon.

Mr Wilson first visited the Continent in 1816, taking advantage of that season which confined Napoleon to St Helena, and let Europe all abroad.

Of this tour he has preserved an ample record, filling a large quarto volume, and written in a style of neatly fluent penmanship, the index of a mind freely moving in its own gracefulness. This document he often threatened to destroy, and we have now to thank the affectionate care which rescued it from the author's fastidiousness. Considering that it is the work of a young man who had not reached the years of legal majority, we are sure the reader will agree with us in deeming both the language and the range of thought remarkable.

In the voyage from Leith to Rotterdam he had for his companions three of his fellow-citizens, one of whom, Mr David Laing, still finds appropriate scope for his antiquarian lore among the faded archives of the Signet Library, and another, Mr Black, M.P., ably represents in Parliament his native city. And on his homeward way he was joined by friends. But most of the journey was in

solitude. Whatever else it did, this loneliness was conducive to impressions deep and enduring. Over the scene which arrested him, he could linger without any impatient yoke-fellow pulling him away; and in moments of ravishment he could weep or shout forth his rapture without fear of derision.

It was essentially a poet's pilgrimage. For the caveat against quarrelling there was no need; and we question if, before starting, he had read the rest of Lord Bacon's rules. His purpose and his plan are best described in the following paragraphs:—

"Before setting out, I had determined to remain so totally unfettered, that I would not even prepare myself for the journey, by renewing or completing my very imperfect *reading* acquaintance with the chief parts that I was about to visit. I was going, in sober certainty, to view the real scenes, the ideal images of which had been the objects of my love—until within these few years my hopeless love—ever since I had known what it was that I really wished or wanted; and I was determined to come to the contemplation of them free from all other bias on my mind than would be given to it by the delightful but somewhat misty and indistinct associations which had come to it, as it were of themselves, in my very earliest youth, and had ever since been congregating and engendering together, till at length they had formed a sort of colony there—a

little kingdom of their own, of which Fancy was the sole and undisputed sovereign, and in the midst of which I could at all times take refuge from the dull and dreary realities of common life. I determined, too, that this ideal kingdom should never be overturned but by Nature herself: in fact, that I would not go among these scenes for the purpose of *forming a judgment* of them for myself, but would leave *them* to build up for me a fabric of their own, in the place of the ideal one that I knew they would destroy. I felt it to be something worse than idle to go peeping and prying about, with a pencil and a note-book in my hand, among the mountains of William Tell—to be sketching trees and cottages, or scribbling nothings, in the ideal presence of Manfred, or the real one of Mont Blanc—to be ascertaining the exact distance from Vevay across the lake to the rocks of Meillerie, in order to calculate whether St Preux really could see from thence the dwelling of Julie—to be inquiring the number of the inhabitants, and the price of the necessaries of life, at Clarens—the scene of that immortal kiss, the echoes of which may even now, to an ear properly attuned, be heard mingling with the breezes that whisper among the branches of its chesnut groves, or come fanning the brow—the burning brow—of him who gazes, for the first time, on that cradle and home and heaven of love.

" I repeat, my determination was not only not to prepare

myself for visiting such scenes as these, but when I found myself in the midst of them, not even to examine or record my feelings about them, but to remain in what Wordsworth calls a 'wise passiveness'—to spread open, as it were, my mind and heart and senses to the powers and influences that would everywhere surround me, and leave them to work their own effects, believing that if I was worthy to receive the benefit of such influences, they would come to me of themselves, and remain with me; and that if I was not, no seekings or solicitations could entice them. I therefore wrote nothing about them at the time—I mean, for myself. I did not even endeavour to *remember* anything. I read the poetry of them, as I read written poetry, not for the purpose of criticising it, and getting particular passages by heart, in order to talk about and quote from it, but to feel and enjoy it; not that I might *seem* wiser and better in consequence, but that I might *be so.*"

VOYAGE AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF HOLLAND.

"We are at last safe in Rotterdam after a tedious, though, in other respects, not an unpleasant voyage. For the first forty hours from Leith the wind continued fresh and fair, but on approaching the coast of Norfolk it died away, and left us becalmed in Yarmouth Roads for the greater part of two days. We had then a pretty expeditious passage across to Holland, that is, within six or

eight miles of the coast, but most unfortunately the wind then veered about, and kept us for three days and nights off the island of Voorn, at the mouth of the river Meuse. After sundry delays, we finally succeeded in landing ourselves and baggage on the left bank of the river, opposite Brielle, upon the morning of Sunday the — July, having been ten days on the passage. The time passed more agreeably than I anticipated, having often pictured in my mind the monotony of a voyage, lengthened beyond expectation as ours had been, as exceedingly painful. Indeed, the idea of existence on board of a ship, becalmed on a breathless Indian sea, had to my mind always presented a more dreaded image than a plague-struck city, or the horrors of the most raging tempest, and, what is singular, I have often in dreams leaped from the side of a vessel into the sea, rather than be so immured. But 'time cures all,' and on the tenth day, when I was about to land on the sandy beach of Holland, I felt tolerably reconciled to my situation, although well enough pleased to set foot on such *terra firma* as this marshy country affords. At the same time, though I felt less pain than I expected from this marine captivity, I also experienced less pleasure. The view of the ocean, boundless on every side, which I beheld for the first time, is less sublime than I had imagined, and our notions of the mighty deep are so indefinite that there must usually be a feeling of disap-

pointment on witnessing the distinct circular line which binds the horizon apparently at so short a distance. The deck of the vessel being near the surface of the water, the extent of prospect is much foreshortened, and consequently limited; and, I think, I have frequently seen a greater expanse of water from the top of a high hill in the neighbourhood of the sea, than can be perceived from on board a ship. No doubt there is something impressive in the entire absence of land, and this I felt forcibly on coming on deck the first morning after we had lost sight of it. The feeling, however, such as it is, arises in a great measure from novelty, and decreases day after day. During a storm, perhaps, it may appear to greater advantage, 'the rueful sky and pageantry of fear' being more in unison with the character of the 'green despot,' and when he alone is visible he should appear under the most appropriate form. The tumultuous heaving of the waves also conceals the line of the horizon, and by shortening or extending the distances, as the vessel rises or falls, produces greater variety in the aspect of the scene. But the glory of sunset over a waveless sea is magnificent beyond expression—indeed, what sight in nature is equal to the splendour of the summer sun on a fine evening, whether on the ocean or the land?

"Coleridge's description of the luminous appearance of the sea is, I think, the most picturesque and one of the

most accurate I have ever read. Having the passage by my side in a note to one of his volumes, as extracted from *The Friend,* I cannot help transcribing it here :—

"'A beautiful white cloud of foam at momentary intervals coursed by the side of the vessel with a roar, and little stars of flame danced, and sparkled, and went out in it, and every now and then light detachments of this white, cloud-like foam darted off from the vessel's side, each with its own small constellation, over the sea, and scoured out of sight like a Tartar troop over the wilderness.'

"We had a pleasant walk from the town of Maaslandsluis, near which we landed, to Rotterdam, a distance of nine miles, or according to the Dutch computation, of three hours. Such of the natives as I have seen are clean and neat in their attire beyond conception. We were particularly fortunate in arriving upon a Sunday, as every one was moving under his, her, and its best attire and most demure countenance. We entered the church of Maaslandsluis immediately on our arrival in that town, and were much edified by an excellent sermon in Dutch, pronounced with great emphasis, and listened to with suitable devotion. The interior of the church is very grand, in common, I understand, with most others in Holland, and contains a very superb organ, the tone of which, I have no doubt, was very fine, but as each member of the congregation sung a most vociferous and open-

mouthed accompaniment, my sense of hearing was completely deadened, in so far as regarded the perception of more delicate sounds. Among the ornaments which surrounded the organ, there were a number of little angels playing the fiddle, apparently in a very masterly style."

THE STORKS.

"*Delft, July* 23.—One of the most interesting and picturesque features which I have yet witnessed in the scenery of Holland is the appearance of the storks on the chimney-tops, preening their feathers, and feeding their callow young. The snowy whiteness of their plumage, and their elegant and stately forms, have a fine effect amidst the confusion of a populous and bustling city. This bird, like the ibis among the ancient Egyptians, is considered sacred by the Hollanders. It is never killed or disturbed, however familiar or troublesome it may prove, and that dwelling is considered as fortunate on which it chooses to take up its abode. The young are, however, sometimes captured and sold to slavery, which seems in some degree inconsistent with the veneration which is paid to the personal dignity of the parent bird. I am told that they observe an astonishing regularity in their migrations to and from the country. They usually make their appearance in spring, towards the end of March, and depart in the autumn, about the beginning of September.

They are said to winter in Egypt and the north of Africa. Yesterday evening, which was beautifully calm and serene, when the sun had sunk, and dim twilight overspread the land, I found myself alone in a churchyard: not a voice was audible to disturb the utter solitude and silence with which I was surrounded. A soft and winnowing sound in the air suddenly attracted my attention, and immediately a beautiful pair of storks alighted in the churchyard, within a few paces of the place where I then stood. It was a mild and dewy night, and they were no doubt attracted there by the expectation of a plentiful supper on the slugs and insects which might have left their hiding-places. My unexpected presence, however, seemed to disturb them; for, in a few seconds, they mounted to the steeple of the church, where they sat, uttering their wild and singularly plaintive cries, which added greatly to those impressions of loneliness and seclusion which the situation tended naturally to inspire. Besides the usual note, I observe these birds make a singular noise, apparently by striking the two mandibles of the bill forcibly against each other. This, too, in the silence of a summer night, during which it is usually made, and when heard from the top of some lofty cathedral—a name which most of the churches in Holland deserve to bear—produces a fine effect; and is, indeed, in my mind, already intimately connected with those undefinable sensations, the remnants

as it were of the superstitions of our infancy, which, I believe, most men experience while wandering alone and in darkness, among those venerable piles which have been for so many ages consecrated to the purposes of religion. But I must for the present bid adieu to those 'dwellers in the temple,' though what I have said is due to their memory, from the pleasure which they afforded me during one beautiful evening of summer."

DELFT AND ITS MONUMENTS.

"Delft is said to be an ancient town, and so it appears; for the canals are green and stagnant, and the streets narrow, except at the great central square, which is certainly not insignificant.

"Here I visited the principal church, which is well worthy of inspection for its own intrinsic excellence, and still more so on account of the remains of many illustrious men which it contains, and the superb monuments which a grateful country has erected to their memory.

"The church itself is very large, and is divided in the interior by two ranges of magnificent arched pillars; and there are no galleries to diminish the grandeur produced by the great height of the walls and the vaulting of the noble roof.

"The monuments are worthy of being held in undying remembrance. Indeed, I have somewhere read that Delft

might be considered as the Westminster of Holland, on account of the remains of warriors and of learned men which it contains. In the centre of one compartment of the church stands the splendid mausoleum of William the First, Prince of Orange, a man who is justly considered as the founder of Dutch liberty, and whose memory is revered throughout the land. It is the finest monument in Holland, and is thought by some competent judges to present one of the most perfect specimens of architectural magnificence in Europe.

"It consists of a square base of white marble and bronze, and of a beautiful canopy of similar materials, supported by four alabaster pillars. Between the two pillars facing the great organ sits a bronze statue of the prince, in complete armour, seemingly occupied in the administration of justice. On his right side there is a fine statue of the goddess of Liberty, and on his left stands Justice with her scales. The former struck me as being the more beautiful; it is a production of real genius, and the greater is the pity that a work so perfect should be deformed by anything incongruous or absurd.

'That it is true 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.'

But either the evil star of the artist has, in an inauspicious hour, darkened the light of his genius, or some patriotic son of Batavia, intent on immortality, has generously offered himself as the amender of a work, which, from the

improvement suggested by him, he could not possibly understand; for over the left hand of the beautiful creature before mentioned is placed a ponderous *chapeau-bras*, richly gilded, and sufficiently large, in the eye of taste and feeling, to overshadow one-half of the mausoleum itself, though, no doubt, in the opinion of its infatuated *manufacturer*, spreading a halo light through every corner of the edifice. Above the canopy there is a large and beautiful alabaster urn, on which a suit of armour of white marble, and of most exquisite workmanship, is placed; and near it, the prince is represented stretched upon his tomb. At his feet there is the figure of the dog which, at a former period, having saved his life, by awakening him when his tent was beset by Spaniards, is reported to have refused all sustenance after the death of its beloved master. This great prince, if my memory serves me, was assassinated by a native of Burgundy, who shot him in the breast with three balls, when he was descending his own staircase after dinner. The assassin, whose name was Balthazar Gérard, was supposed to have been instigated on the one hand by the machinations of some diabolical monks, and on the other, allured by the gold and by the promises of the perfidious Philip. Gérard, like many other villains, was well endowed with personal courage; and, with a resolution worthy of a better cause, he sacrificed his own life in order to destroy this famous restorer and protector of religious liberty.

"To the left of this beautiful structure is the grave of Grotius, with a monument; but paltry in comparison with the former. It consists chiefly of a large medallion, representing the head of Grotius, in white marble, and a child leaning upon an inverted torch. As the medallion is considered as very like him, he must have been an ugly man. This city is the place of his birth.

"At the other end of the church, in a lonely corner, lie the remains of Leeuwenhoek, famous for his microscopical discoveries. Over his cold earth a plain monument is erected by his daughter, with a simple though beautiful inscription in Latin. I was pleased by the utter stillness of this corner of the church; it felt like a place where the person whose ashes it contained would have delighted to pursue his beautiful discoveries unmolested by the world, and in death accorded well with the gentle spirit of him whose life was peace."

THE SPIRE AT DELFT, AND THE STORKS AGAIN.

"From this elevated situation I had a fine view of my old friends the storks, all busily employed in feeding their young. I could even keep them in sight during their excursions to the neighbouring canals, in search of food for their unfledged offspring. The impatience of the callow nestlings on perceiving the approach of the assiduous parent, was extreme. They stretched their long necks

over the nests from the chimney-tops, the sooner to enjoy the wished-for morsel, and appeared every moment as if about to precipitate themselves into the streets below. *En passant,* I may remark that when in Rotterdam, I questioned a Dutchman concerning the probable origin of the respect and protection which is afforded to this bird; he answered, as I expected, that it was on account of their clearing the canals of frogs and other amphibious gentry with which they abound. I had not, however, proceeded ten yards after Mynheer had left me, when I observed an old woman sitting under a tree, with a most excellent supply of frogs in a basket, ready for sale, and in fact before I left her, a girl came up 'nothing loth,' and made a purchase. If, therefore, frogs are in request as an article of food, as it is known they have been for centuries, no thanks are due to the storks for their efforts in diminishing their number, and as, in as far as I have heard or read, there are no noxious or poisonous animals in the country, it is probable that the popular superstition in favour of these birds must have originated in some other cause. Besides, it is generally admitted that still waters stagnate sooner when deprived of animal life than when teeming with aquatic myriads, so that their claims to protection as purifiers of the water, are at best of a dubious nature. They may, however, act as a check to the superabundant production of such creatures during the heats of summer, the

increase of which is no doubt favoured by the natural moisture of the soil and climate."

LEYDEN AND THE GREAT EXPLOSION.

"*July* 25.—In this church lie the remains of Gerard de Meerman, a well-known bibliographer. This man died of fright, in consequence of the explosion which took place here on the 12th of January 1807.* A French vessel from Amsterdam for Delft, lying in the canal Van Rappenberg, in the centre of the city, laden with ten thousand pounds weight of gunpowder, blew up about five o'clock in the afternoon, killed some hundreds of the inhabitants, destroyed great part of the town, and produced the utmost havoc and consternation. My servant told me he heard the noise at Amsterdam, two-and-twenty miles off. Many of the inhabitants were sitting at dinner, and perished among the ruins of their dwellings, with their wives and children. A Jewish school suffered considerably; sixteen of the children were blown up. A charity school near it was also destroyed, with all its inmates. Fifty children at a boarding-school narrowly escaped by the collision of two walls which supported the roof, only two of these were crushed to death, and a third perished with fright in its father's arms. Those who were saved rushed

* There is here some mistake. Gerard Meerman died in 1771, and John Meerman lived many years after the fatal explosion of 1807.—Ed.

into the court-yard, and the meeting there of parents and children is described to have been terrible. The windows of my bed-room command a view of this very spot, and of what I at first thought a fine park, with a canal, and trees, and pleasant walks. I did not then know that this was where the explosion had taken place, and that at one period it was the most populous quarter of the city."

THE LIBRARY AT LEYDEN.

"In the course of my peregrinations I formed an acquaintance with a bookseller of some intelligence, whose name I forget. He is librarian to the University, and curator of its valuable Greek and Latin and Oriental manuscripts, and obligingly offered me an inspection of every object of curiosity under his charge. I went to the library, where I found my newly acquired friend true to his appointment. He shewed me many old books worthy of attention, and sundry manuscripts of exceeding beauty, great age, and exquisite perfection. A manuscript copy of the Iliad, written on vellum, and richly illuminated, deserves inspection ; also an illuminated copy of Virgil, on the same material. Divers MSS. of Dutchmen, with long names of great celebrity, of whom I had never before heard a syllable, were shewn me ; and many books with the annotations of Scaliger, and a MS. holograph of that author, besides many others, each worthy of a volume.

"I must never cease to remember the ingenious and valuable present of the late king, Louis Bonaparte, to the collection of the library. It is the work of a German, and consists of 135 volumes formed of wood. The binding of each book is formed of a different tree; the back is ornamented with pieces of the bark, and such mosses, lichens, and other parasitical plants, as characterise the species. Each volume opens, as it were, in the centre of the leaves, and contains the bud, leaves, flower, fruit, farina, and every other part in any degree illustrative of the nature of the tree. It affords a complete and scientific exemplification of 135 trees, beginning with the oaks and ending with the juniper; and, in fact, may be considered as a brief and perfect epitome of the German groves and forests. In the case of plants, such as the rose and juniper, the ligneous parts of which are not sufficiently large for the purposes required, the binding is formed of some ordinary wood, sprinkled over with fine moss, and then elegantly barred with the rose or juniper wood, giving the volume the appearance of a valuable old manuscript with iron clasps. On the whole, it is one of the most ingenious and complete productions I have ever seen.

"My friend the librarian was, I found, one of the chief causes of the most valuable manuscripts in the collection not being transferred to Paris. He was continued in office during the administration of the French, and being

naturally inimical to that nation, he endeavoured, by every device in his power, to elude their rapacity, and to prevent the manuscripts from being seen by the *savans* who visited Leyden. One professor was appointed by Bonaparte, and took up his residence in the city, with the avowed and express purpose of procuring whatever was rare or curious, for the adornment of the capital of the great nation. The keys were frequently demanded from our friend for the purposes of investigation, and the demand was as often eluded by him, under the pretence of their being in the charge of some professor or other, who was either confined by sickness or under the necessity of residing a few days in the country. In this manner the matter was fortunately delayed until the great and unexpected revolution took place, which rendered such precautions unnecessary; and the chief actor in the scheme, who seems passionately fond of the black letter, has happily survived to enjoy the fruits of his resolute and praiseworthy conduct."

A PIOUS FRAUD.

"*Antwerp, August* 1.—By the by, the most ingenious piece of devotion of which I have heard for some time, took place here not long since, as I was informed by an ingenious merchant of the city with whom I supped the other evening. A respectable woman with an infant in

her arms entered the cathedral one morning when the priest was alone, making the altar neat and tidy, and scraping off some spots of wax which had fallen the preceding night. The woman addressed him in a most earnest and affecting manner, and with due humility unfolded her tale of sorrow. Her child, she said, was suffering under some mortal malady, the skill of the leech had been applied in vain, and she was at last convinced that nothing could save her beauteous babe from the jaws of death but being placed for a moment in the arms of her tutelary saint. The saint's name I forget, but he was stuck up in a niche of the wall, with a neat balcony before him, in the form of a goodly marble statue. The priest was at last moved by her entreaties; he procured a ladder and ascended to the sacred niche, entered the balcony and placing the babe in the arms of the statue, he asked the grateful mother if she was satisfied. 'Perfectly so,' said the lady, and, carefully removing the ladder, she walked coolly out of the church, leaving her rosy infant, the astonished priest, and the unconscious saint, all equally elevated, there to remain till the next brother of the community should arrive."

WATERLOO.

"*Brussels, August* 3–5.—The first thing which an Englishman is expected, and, indeed, in a great measure

obliged to do on arriving here, is to betake himself to Waterloo.

> 'Westward from Brussels lies the field of blood,
> Some two hours' journey for a well-girt man;
> A horseman who in haste pursues his road,
> Would reach it ere the second hour began.'

"So says the Laureate. Being neither a well-girt man, nor a horseman, I hired a *voiture* and departed. On this subject, as on all others on which so much has been said, and sometimes well said, by others, I shall say little. I spent three hours on the bloody spot. The field itself now bears scarce a trace of the fierce encounter. It is in a state of high cultivation, and covered with fine crops of beans and peas, and various kinds of grain, and as the divisions of the farms here are much more extensive than with us, it cannot be traversed this year with the same facility as last. There are, however, footpaths crossing over some of the more elevated parts, from which a tolerable view may be obtained at certain points. One feature of the vegetation is from the first very apparent, and when the cause is known, produces an impressive effect. In many parts of the field the grain is of a darker green and higher growth than in others, and appears at a distance as if the rays of the sun had been intercepted by dense clouds, but beneath these spots lie the thousands who perished in the fight, and whose bodies were buried where they fell. If, however, nature has resumed her sway in the fields, the

houses of Hougoumont still present a most direful spectacle. The walls are for the most part blackened and in ruins, and such parts as remain bear terrible signs of destruction and death. They are pierced by cannon-balls and marked with bullets on every side, and many of the latter are still lodged in the half-burned beams which support the blighted remains of what were once human dwellings. The court-door is actually riddled, and the shot appears to have poured in from every direction. It was among these buildings that the most terrible and most individual fighting was maintained, and with what obstinacy on both sides may be seen from the face of things, were there no other proof. The well-known garden, with its little wood, which was attacked from so many points at once, was very interesting, although it now bears a very different aspect from what it did when the fight was done. Everything is neat and in order, the roses are in full blow, and the small fantastic parterres of flowers, all in their bright array, seemed strangely placed so near the houses of desolation. The surrounding trees, however, are credible witnesses of the bloody fray; most of them are pierced with bullets, and many have had branches and large pieces of the bark and wood carried away by cannon-balls. The spot is particularly pointed out where it is said that an officer and seven men were killed by one shot. It must evidently have been a spent ball, and shot from a distance, though

probably a very heavy one; for at the place the garden is defended by two walls,—the outer one and that which was next the French artillery is higher than the inner, yet it remains untouched, whereas there is the space of a foot on the top of the inner, near which the men were ranged, which is entirely driven in. There is the skull and arm-bone of a Frenchman sticking in the wall near this; and in another part of the garden the shoulder-blade of an English officer, who was buried there, is seen projecting from the ground, and still connected to the body by strong ligaments. The person who shewed me the grounds of Hougoumont was in the house during the battle. A boy whom I saw told me he remained *at home* till two in the afternoon; but supposing the house might be set on fire, he set off for the wood with all speed, and, as he himself said, almost blind with fear, he had to cross a good part of the field of battle. All the women and children, as well from Hougoumont as the neighbouring villages, took refuge in the wood of Soignies. Such of the peasants as I conversed with denied having plundered the dead bodies during the night, alleging that it was done by the other soldiers. At Antwerp I supped with a gentleman who was on the field two days after the battle; it was covered with the dead and dying, and almost all the former, and several of the latter, were completely stripped. Many of the wounded, who had received no sustenance since the day

of the battle, were offering the peasants five francs for a drink of water."

ST DIE—MORN AMID THE MOUNTAINS.

"*Sept.* 10.—We halted for the night at St Die. Here there was for a time a slight interruption of that calm and placid state of things which to me is so inseparable from enjoyment. A French officer, who was now pretty far advanced in intoxication, had, it seems, engaged a chaise to carry him from St Die, at a certain hour, to a certain place. When that hour arrived, the vehicle came to the door as was meet, but the officer, who had indulged pretty freely during supper, felt himself so comfortable in his situation that he determined to remain where he was, and accordingly ordered the postilion to return in the morning. Now, by the laws of posting in this country, it is ordained, that he who orders a chaise to the door for the purpose of undertaking any journey, must either adhere to his intention or defray one half of the charges which would have been incurred in the event of the proposed journey being completed. But the gentleman in question refused to do either, and swore by his sabre that he should pass the night at St Die. This, of course, led to much altercation on both sides, which, while it lasted, was quite sufficient to interrupt all comfort. The *maître-des-postes* was at length sent for, and confirmed the position

maintained by the postilion, that a payment of one half must be made before he could take his departure. In the meantime, the knight of the sabre became sober, and the interposition of magisterial authority being talked of, he thought it better to decamp; so, yielding to the importunities of mine host, who feared the disgust which his conduct might occasion to the other guests, he suffered himself to be half conducted, half dragged, into the chaise, and was soon whirled out of sight by the triumphant postilion, amid the shouts of a dozen or two of idle people, whom his noisy protestations had assembled at the door.

"I sat in the window of my bed-room for some hours after the inhabitants of the house had retired to rest. It was a heavenly night—the moon just appearing from the side of a dark and steep mountain. She threw her pale light over a beautiful valley, in the centre of which there flowed a rapid stream, the rushing sound of which was distinctly audible. One or two white cottages were visible on the opposite side of the valley, near the outskirts of a thick wood, which extended upwards to the base of a long range of irregular and broken cliffs. These terminated the view; and above their highest peak, there was one brilliant star which, though lovely as any among the innumerable constellations which surrounded it, appeared to belong more to earth than to heaven; and but for its clear

and constant ray, it might have been deemed a beacon light among the mountain tops.

"I was much delighted at the prospect of so soon breathing the mountain air. I retired to bed when the moon had sunk behind the cliffs, anticipating much pleasure from crossing the mountain-chain on the ensuing morn. Indeed, my passion for ascending to the tops of hills would almost induce me to believe in the transmigration of the human soul, and that, having been at some former period a chamois-hunter, or shepherd among the Alps, I, still retain, in the debased spirit of an attorney's clerk, a fellowship with those sublime impressions which, in another state, probably constituted the very essence of my existence.

"11*th*.—With this day's journey I was not disappointed, though, from the accounts of a fellow-traveller, my expectations had been much excited. Leaving St Die at four in the morning, we, ere long, entered a narrow valley between two high and precipitous mountains, at the base of which were many romantic cottages. The sides of these mountains were well clothed with pines, and the summits composed of gray and castellated rocks, tenanted by the eagle alone. On arriving at the head of the valley all exit seems impossible. Rocks on rocks arise, as if to bid defiance to the power and ingenuity of man. The mists of the morning were still resting on the bosom of

the valley, and mid-way upon the hills; but higher up, and gray with the moss of years, with here and there a solitary pine, endeavouring to maintain the empire of vegetation, the summits lifted their venerable tops clear and unobscured to heaven. Ere long these snowy vapours, 'into their airy elements resolved, were gone,' and we beheld a road tortuously winding up the sides of a mountain among crags and torrents, by which we were to ascend to the head of an adjoining valley. We here left the carriage, and pursuing a nearer and more direct route, after a pretty arduous ascent, gained the summit of the mountain. What a glorious view was now before our eyes! never shall I forget the valley of St Marie.

"The mountain air usually acts upon me like the famous elixir. I feel as if I were inhaling life, and strength, and immortality at every breath. The higher I ascend the happier I become; and when I reach the topmost summit, a singular feeling prompts me to spring upwards and leave the earth. It was this which made me inquire so anxiously when in Paris concerning the possibility of ascending with some of the aëronauts, and I greatly deplored the disappointment, when I learned that my hopes were frustrated. In the present case, the change in my state of mind was sudden and remarkable, and when I contrasted my feelings, while breathing with pain and difficulty the tainted air of a corrupted city, with those which I ex-

perienced as a joyful mountaineer, I could scarcely credit my personal identity. A few days ago I was groping my way, by the pale light of a trembling taper, through the damp catacombs of Paris, surrounded by millions of grim grinning skulls, placed crossways and in circles, as if in derision of human life; and now I was breathing the natural and balmy breath of heaven, and standing on the verge of a valley so beautiful, that peace and happiness must surely dwell in it for ever."

BRISSAC AND THE FIRST SIGHT OF THE RHINE.

"13*th*.—Towards the afternoon of this day I hired a *char-à-banc*, which is an open carriage in common use here, and proceeded on my journey towards Brissac, a French town on the banks of the Rhine. Mungo Park himself could scarcely have experienced a stronger desire to behold the yellow Niger, than I did to see the boundary of 'the mighty Germany.' Arriving at Brissac, I entered three gates, crossed over three fosses, passed under three portcullises, and had my passport examined by an old gentleman who could neither read French, German, nor Dutch, the only three languages of which it was composed. He seemed to consider it chiefly in the light of Hebrew, as he began at the end, and then turned it upside down. A few francs were sufficient to convince him how forlorn his hopes were of becoming a linguist at so advanced a

period of life. There are here two towns of the same name. The French Brissac is two or three miles from the river side, so I determined that same evening to depart for the German border. The German town, called Alt-Brissac, is built upon a high and rocky promontory of the river, and presents a formidable aspect, though now in a state of great dilapidation, having been dismantled by an opposite fortress during the French wars. It has still a noble appearance, and forms a fine representative of its mighty country,

'With gray but leafy walls, where ruin greenly dwells.'

"At six in the evening I found myself standing by the side of the monarch of European rivers, and a most magnificent object it is. Here it is not less than six hundred feet broad, and runs apparently at the rate of nearly seven miles an hour. Immediately opposite the German fortress its waters are confined within two hundred feet of their natural bed, and the impetuous flow is prodigious; it rages past the dark rock which here endeavours to oppose its course, and appears as if rejoiced in avenging this violation of its power on the low willowy isles which are scattered on its bosom. The trees on these islands have suffered from its force, and bend before it, their summits being only a few feet from the ground, and pointing down the stream. Even those on the banks have the same oppressed appearance, having probably felt the power of the green despot

during the raging of the winter flood. This gives a singular character to many parts of the scenery, and impresses one more forcibly than any other circumstance could do with an idea of the strength and rapidity of the river, besides bestowing upon it the aspect of an almost living power.

"The sun was now sinking behind the purple summits of the mountains of Lorraine, the outline of which was bordered by a brilliant line of golden light, and many lovely clouds, adorned with the brightest hues, were resting in the western sky. The Rhine appeared in the distance, sweeping down the valley, and reflecting on its waters the last beams of the god of day, while, on the opposite side, was heard the voice of the sentinel, and the war-like flourish of the trumpet, warning the peaceful labourers in the fields that the gates of the fortress were about to be closed. In the back-ground the high hills of Suabia were visible, embrowned with the remnants of the ancient forest, and their broad expanse rendered more magnificent as seen through the medium of the sultry twilight. Ere long the clouds of night descended on the valley; the course of the river was now only discernible by a vast serpentine wreath of mist which gathered on its waters, though its strong and sonorous flow was distinctly audible, 'piercing the night's dull ear,' and the wild note of the bittern was heard while she ascended from her

lonely nest in some willowy isle to the still region above the clouds. Without other sight or sound I stood alone in this majestic wilderness. I soon found, however, that I had unfortunately wandered so long and so far among the low brushwood near the river, that I had entirely lost all trace of anything resembling the footsteps of the human race. If I turned towards the land I might walk into one of those deep pools filled with water to defend the frontier —if I bent my course in the other direction, one step into the Rhine would be my first and last, and I might find myself off the Dogger-bank by the morning of the ensuing day. What was to be done? I was about to ruminate seriously on this important subject, when I heard the vociferous shout of a ferryman within a few yards of my forlorn post. I accosted him in good Scotch and bad French, supposing if he were a German he would probably understand the one, if a Frenchman, possibly the other. He seemed to comprehend both, and with his assistance and direction I succeeded in returning to the town which I had left a few hours before, my head-quarters for the night."

PRÆ-RUSKINITE REMARKS ON LANDSCAPE-PAINTING, AND A GHOST STORY.

Next to Wordsworth's Poems, there were few books which Mr Wilson received with such ardour, and read

with such self-abandonment, as the writings of Ruskin. Indeed, the fourth volume of "Modern Painters" was the last volume he perused, and from which he made extracts into his commonplace book. Passages like the following, and others which will hereafter occur, shew how early thoughts had passed through his own mind akin to those which from Turner's great idolater have since found fierce and eloquent expression :—

"*Sept.* 13.—Departing from Brissac after breakfast, I returned to the French town of the same name, and having arranged matters to our mutual satisfaction, I set out in a neat *char-à-banc* with one strong athletic horse, under the guidance of a Frenchman, who had had the honour of being one of Bonaparte's postilions during the Russian campaign. We travelled along the banks of the Rhine, through a district of finely varied aspect, sometimes close to the river, at other times at some distance from it, and reached the confines of Switzerland about sunset. It was a beautiful calm evening, with a sky such as Claude would have painted. All things lay in the still reposing beauty which characterises the works of that famous artist, and subdued and mellowed by the almost visible air which hung around them. It is this aërial and transparent veil which, to my mind, forms the pervading spirit of landscape, and the difficulty of representing it, or its influence and effects, may be one great cause of the rarity with which anything

like a perfect triumph has hitherto accompanied the efforts of the painter. He can bring together an untroubled sky, a serene ocean, a smiling landscape; but that forming spirit which pervades and encircles the appearances of nature can scarcely be regarded as an attribute of human genius. Indeed, what imagination can conjure up scenes so enchanting as those which nature displays with such lavish profusion in every region of the earth? In the most inspired dream of creative fancy, or the most successful effort of imitative art, the objects, lovely though they may often be, always possess some qualities which hinder them from blending together into one just proportioned picture, and the scene thus raised or depicted partakes of the narrowness of mortal power. It is otherwise, however, with the representations of the human face divine; for this branch of the art seems to bear away the palm from nature herself. How many beautiful countenances are visible in every large town in Europe! but where is the one among them all which can bear a comparison with a fine Madonna of Raphael? Yet what landscape painter has ever given the far-receding splendour of the western sky which almost every fine summer evening affords? At the same time Claude, Turner, and Thomson are each an honour to his age and country; there are some fine conceptions of aërial grandeur in the wild combinations of cloud and vapour in some of Schetky's skies;

and I have little doubt that when Williams returns to his native land, the contents of his portfolio will create associations in the breast of every true lover of nature, not unworthy the calm glory of a Grecian autumn, or the evening splendour which invests the blue mountains of Friuli.

"But I forget my own picture while reflecting on those of others. I have said that the sky was such as Claude would have rejoiced to imitate. There was a mild and almost breathless stillness in the air, which he alone knew how to represent, although all who have studied the finest features of landscape must be aware, that it is to this we owe some of our most delightful and harmonious perceptions, while contemplating the beauty of external nature.

'A harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the land
Of silence, though there be no voice.'—

"The battlements of a strongly fortified city were seen at some height in the distance, their square lines broken by deep masses of wood; while in the nearer ground there were open groves, with green fields intersected by irregular footpaths, and scattered cottages partly concealed by large single trees. We were in the neighbourhood of Basle, the frontier town; but the gates were unfortunately closed for the night, so we were forced to remain in a small village on the outside of the walls. My excursion this

day, considered geographically, was rather curious, as I had passed the morning in France, the forenoon in Germany, and the evening in Switzerland.

"Having solaced myself with a good supper, and a bottle of Burgundy, and not feeling inclined to sleep, I thought it better to take a ramble for an hour or two, though it was now not far from midnight. I accordingly set out, and having walked several miles, I at last found myself, by the side of an ancient ruin of simple structure, which, I immediately convinced myself, must be the remains of a druidical temple. A few pale withered stumps of the mountain ash stood together in a row like the remains of some forlorn hope, and accorded well with the fancy which had entered my mind, as these trees are known to have been in ancient times religiously dedicated to protect and overshadow such buildings. Everything around me was bleak and desolate, and scarcely one relic of ancient grandeur assisted the imagination in peopling it with the spirits of the elder time. Yet the very idea of being upon the spot where the hoary Druid ruminated the mysteries of his religion, where the cromlek streamed with human blood, where the shady grove moaned with the cries of convulsive death, or where the sword of the Roman soldier put a period to the reign of this horrid infatuation—the very idea of this, even when entering the mind amid scenery ill calculated to excite emotions of any kind, con-

tained something that awakened many a long train of recollected thought, and subjected the soul to the temporary dominion of superstitious awe. I had already walked several cheerless miles, with my imagination full of those images which solitude and fancy suggest, and was now resting on an old mouldering ruin, which, whether druidical or not, had doubtless one day witnessed many a fearful sight. Not a soul was near—the Rhine was heard wailing in the distance, the night-wind moaned through the chinks of the wall, and the moon, almost hid in clouds, gave a wild and uncertain light. What rendered my thoughts more solemn, was my ignorance of the part of the country I was in; for I had left the main road, and wandered over heaths and commons for some time. A peculiar creaking noise attracted my attention, and my astonishment and horror may be more easily imagined than described, when on looking up I beheld within a few yards the ghastly spectre of a human body. My fancied Druids vanished into thin air, and I sat for some moments rooted to the spot. Ere long, however, my resolution returned, and on investigating this horrible phantom, I discovered it to be no 'unreal mockery,' but the skeleton of a man in chains. I returned to the village with some difficulty, and got to bed about daylight."

THE PEDESTRIAN'S ADVANTAGE.

"*Sept.* 16.—On leaving Basle I need not say how sorry I was. I had there only passed two little days, but they were pleasant and happy ones; and though I should live many a long year, I don't think I shall ever forget them. My regret, however, at leaving it, gradually wore away as I proceeded on my journey to Lauffenburg, for every step I took discovered some new beauty. The road winds along a number of little valleys, caused by the wooded hills which form the banks of the Rhine; and as often as the traveller turns about, he beholds a beautiful extent of country behind him, covered with hanging woods, and either swelling into lofty hills, or sinking into deep dells with the most delightful variety. A number of lovely cottages scattered through the vales, and glimmering amid the trees, present continual objects for admiration, and each one becomes envied till a more beautiful one appears. So delighted was I with this walk, that though many leagues long, I scarcely knew where I was till it was over, and then I could not help wishing that I had to perform it again. There is certainly something in the noise and motion of a carriage, which prevents the mind from feeling excited by rural scenery in the way in which I feel mine to be when my body is unconfined. That calm and placid breathing of nature which every one must have seen and felt who has walked alone through a fine country, cannot be enjoyed

except on foot. The face of nature bears a different aspect, and the cracking of the coachman's whip is sufficient to dissolve the charm, and cause

> 'The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills,'

to vanish. But on foot everything makes an impression —every winding of a river, and each beautiful tree,

> 'And the shrill matin song
> Of birds from every bough,'

make the soul feel all the intoxication of delight. These are intellectual pleasures of a high and noble order; but there are others of a less dignified, though equally essential nature. I mean the delight of finding one's-self in a comfortable inn, after a long walk, the fatigue of which, though by no means painfully perceptible at the time, is generally quite sufficient to render bodily repose most grateful, and the increased relish which is bestowed on everything which reminds one of the immortal Beauvilliers, and the peerless Robert."

LAUFFENBURG.

"*Sept.* 17.—Of Lauffenburg, where I now am, what shall I say? That it is by far the most delightful little spot I ever saw. When I entered it I thought, Have I lived so long and never heard of this paradise? How many places are there in this world most lovely, that those at a

distance know nothing of? Even in my waking dreams, when my fancy has combined in one scene every beauteous image that memory could supply—when the imperfections of reality mingled not with the fairy creation, and the spirit of loveliness was spread over the quiet glades of solitude, a more heavenly picture never charmed my wandering soul. Indeed, what imagination can conjure up a scene so enchanting as those which have started most beautiful from the hand of Nature, and when art with cautious touch has opened up the charms that are secret, without defacing those that are obvious and striking? In the blessed moments of holy meditation, mortal beings can indeed partake of heavenly powers, but a wide distance must exist even then between the aspiring efforts of frail mortality and the unlaboured sublimity of universal Intelligence. During the dreams of the soul, which our hopes and wishes create, and our reason is unable to destroy, I have wished to retire from the loud and stirring world, and among the loveliness of some far removed valley to pass the days that fate may have assigned me. Even when engaged in the busy scenes of social life, the thought of this has passed wildly over my heart, and at the same time a cold trembling fear that such wishes can never be realised. But if such a visionary scheme were indeed to be fulfilled, where could I be happier than where I now am? So sweet is this spot, that the very winds of heaven seem slowly and

fondly to float over it, and the little summer birds sing more cheerily amid its holy solitude. Since I have seen it, I have not been conscious of feeling any emotion allied to evil; and what could make the heart evil disposed amid such general peace and happiness?"

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

"*Sept.* 19.—On Wednesday I departed, before the mists of the morning had risen from the valley, and pursued my route to Schaffhausen. An old ruined castle was seen on the brow of a steep hill, with white clouds breaking around it in a very picturesque style. I crossed one or two small streams, with antique mossy bridges, but the majestic river was inaudible. During my walk this day, I recollected that I was within a few days' journey of the source of the Danube, and being suddenly inspired with the desire of beholding the parent of that famous river, I struck off to the leftward, and entered the Black Forest, with the intention of crossing the Suabian mountains next day. After walking, however, for several hours, without meeting a single being, and seeing nothing but bare hills before me, I began to think it might be as well to sleep beneath a human roof, particularly as I felt both fatigued and feverish; so turning to the right, I again directed my steps towards the Rhine, the course of which could easily be traced by the fine woods and cultivated fields on either side, and thus

ingloriously terminated my excursion to the Danube. I arrived at Schaffhausen in the evening, having taken a near cut through a small forest in the neighbourhood, at the instigation of, and in company with, a German peasant. We descended upon the town from an elevated ridge of land, from which I had a noble view of the old Rhine and the surrounding country. About a quarter of a mile from Schaffhausen, I passed close by a small mount surrounded by a stone wall, which altogether reminded me of the druidical temple I had erected near Basle. My attention was more particularly attracted to it by a group of children on the top, who seemed intently examining something on its surface. I accordingly ascended, and found to my surprise the verdant sod covered with blood. On inquiry, I found that this place was what the natives call the *Rappenstein*,* which is the place of public execution. The blood I saw was possibly still warm, as an unhappy malefactor had been executed that afternoon. Their heads are chopped off with a two-handed sword, and this, by a dexterous executioner, is accomplished by a single blow.

"*Sept.* 20.— Immediately below the fall, the circling waters of the river form a broad expanse, in which there is a little island. On this there is a house, one room of which is fitted up with an excellent camera obscura. This gives a beautiful picture of the foaming cataract,

* That is, *Rabenstein*, the raven's stone.

with its gray rocks and rich under-wood, as well as of the vineyards which encompass it, and their white cottages. The continual descent of the enormous river, the waving of the adjoining woods, and the dark shadows of the clouds floating over the vine-clad hills, produce the most complete deception I ever witnessed. Indeed, I could scarcely believe that it was only a reflection of nature, and not nature's self, and when the light was admitted, the whole appeared to vanish rather by the hand of enchantment than from natural causes. I would certainly advise any one visiting this neighbourhood to make a point of seeing the camera, for I really think I derived as much pleasure from it as from the scene itself. The roaring voice of the river renders the delusion perfect.

"I saw this fall from many different points of view, each successively appearing finer than the other; and though I arrived at the foot of it about eleven in the forenoon, it was half-past eight in the evening before I returned to the *auberge*. One view from a pine wood opposite is particularly fine, and it was at this time adorned by a bright and magnificent rainbow. About eight o'clock, when everything was obscure except the foaming cataract, I was still seated by the river side, enjoying its tremendous melody. Suddenly a stream of fire shot up from the rock close by, and threw a flood of stars among the silvery waters. For a few seconds I was

a good deal astonished at this startling phenomenon, and the unceasing voice of the river deadening all other sounds, it was some little time before I discovered that a smith's forge was built near the foot of the fall. It produced a singularly beautiful effect, as this stream of light 'sprung upward like a pyramid of fire,' or gently bending across the water, rose and fell like a magnificent plume of gold; and sometimes, when it was about to expire, the bright flickering flames gave a meteoric appearance to the columns of spray similar to that so frequently observed in a ship's wake at sea. Salmon, and other migratory fish, advance no higher up the Rhine than the large pool below the fall."

APPROACH TO THE ALPS.

"*Sept.* 22.—I had by this time left Constance and its mighty waters at some distance behind me, and by the winding of the road among low and richly wooded hills, it was hidden from my view. The scenery continued beautiful during this day's walk. The majestic Alps, covered with snow, were visible in the distance, and it gladdened my heart to be approaching them at every step. They seemed to my imagination the guardian angels of a mysterious and unknown land towards which I was journeying by slow but certain steps, and on entering which I felt as if certain of being purified from the sins of the world, and relieved of all its sorrows. The unsullied whiteness of

the snow presented to my mind a beautiful emblem of the innocent lives of the inhabitants, unspotted by the crimes which contaminate the other races of mankind; and the increasing purity of the air, as I approached those awful barriers of nature, strengthened the idea which fancy had created, that I was about to make a pilgrimage into some region blissful as the gardens of Eden. The philosopher, or reasoning moralist, may smile contemptuously at all this, and I certainly am no ways disposed to prevent him. Perhaps he may never have experienced such feelings himself, and people are too apt to laugh at what they do not understand; or perhaps he has felt them and been ashamed to indulge in the overflowings of his own soul, because, forsooth, of the pride of reason. But Providence has wisely planned that happiness should sometimes be involuntary, and apparently without a cause—that the heart should be well pleased, it knows not why, and cares not to know.

"The different tempers and dispositions of mankind are in no way more clearly displayed than in the manner of their travelling, and the objects which principally engage their attention in the country through which they pass. It is not a little amusing to behold the very different points of view in which tourists contemplate the same object, and to read accounts of rural scenery given by minds of opposite formation. Were it not that the names

of places very luckily remain pretty much the same, and also the great leading features of external nature, it would be frequently impossible to discover that the same scene was the object of those various descriptions which the generosity of tourists has afforded us. A man of lively imagination and enthusiastic soul is apt to describe the beauties of nature in too glowing colours—to swell rivulets into torrents, a few trees into a forest, and little eminences into lofty mountains. This is more peculiarly the case when the scene before him is really delightful, when his heart is expanded by the loveliness around him, and the fancy ready to people the surrounding scenery with the imaginary beings of its creation. In those hallowed moments of existence, it would discover a wisdom little to be envied, to destroy the dear delusion, to attend to those defects in beauty which every reality possesses, and with the cold glance of heartless criticism dwell dissatisfied on a few imperfections, amid the many beauties of untouched, unprofaned nature. Whenever, therefore, my admiration of any rural scenery falls short of that expressed in any description of it, there are other feelings arise in my mind in ample recompence for the disappointment I may have sustained. I think that on the spot where my emotions are of little value, hearts either more enthusiastically framed than mine, or, at the particular time, more kindly disposed, have enjoyed great

pleasures, have discerned hidden charms that my eye cannot perceive, and indulged in trains of associated thought to which I am a stranger. The consciousness of this makes me reflect with humility on the structure of my own soul, and inspires me with a kindness for mankind in general, by making me know that there are many persons in existence, whom I never saw, whose characters are noble, and who can see sources of enjoyment in objects that to me are indifferent. Such reflections are of no mean use, and do more to improve the heart than many a long page of morality, or many a vaunted advice of sententious wisdom. It has often struck me since I entered this sublime country, that the inclination and the power which the soul possesses to connect moral feelings with natural scenery, are very beautiful indications of the benevolence of the Deity, for by means of them, wherever we may be placed, there are sources of enjoyment constantly within our reach. When the eye is closed, the imagination is awake; when the scene is barren, fancy can cover the wildness with beauties selected from everything that is lovely in nature. Since this is the case, why should the speech be so constantly repeated that travelling alone must be dull? Have I not been travelling in utter solitude through glorious valleys, by majestic rivers, and in sight of the most sublime mountains in Europe, and in what period of my life have

I felt less of the loneliness or oppression of being alone? Some people seem to entertain as mortal an aversion to solitariness as a mad dog to water, and accordingly so lay their plans that they are never above a few minutes out of sight of some person or another—a case certainly much to be pitied. The very use of society is to render solitude agreeable. The man who is afraid of being alone never enjoys the pleasure resulting from mental independence, which is the noblest of all. He feels his happiness inseparable from some person whose company he may not always have it in his power to command—he lives more for others than for himself, that is to say, he puts the care of his happiness entirely in the hands of others, whereas, that care should only be intrusted to our own hearts. It becomes, therefore, the duty of every one to be able to be alone; and to acquire this ability the best method is practice. Every mind has sources of happiness unknown to itself; these sources are gradually discovered, and become more copious in proportion as pleasure is drawn from them. A knowledge of this fact, combined with a natural instinct for solitude, has long made me fond of being alone, and of travelling alone; and though, in the course of my solitary perambulations, I have often felt those moments of listlessness to which I suppose every one is occasionally subject, I never had reason to attribute them to the circumstance of being alone, but to

the imperfections of my nature, which would have been the same in the midst of crowded cities as in the loneliest valleys. It is not necessary that when alone our minds should be constantly revolving some subject of meditation. There is a kind of tranquil happiness independent of the exertions of the understanding, and even little connected with the excursions of fancy. During such moments we feel a kindness as it were for everything around us, animate and inanimate, all dislikes and animosities are forgotten, and we feel a disposition that is well expressed by the word 'good' in its best and noblest signification. The heart is in a state of complete harmony, the images of hills, trees, waters, fields, and all the appearances of nature, make us virtuously inclined. We can then sit upon the bank of a stream, or the side of a hill, and look around us with feelings of contentment and peace; and even with the existence of sorrow, everything looks so quiet and so blessed, that grief itself partakes of the universal joy."

A few years after this, the sober experience of life, and, we may add, a sounder theology, materially weakened Mr Wilson's faith in nature as the panacea for the ills of mortality; but they only deepened his love of the landscape, and gave him intenser consciousness of that benign and adorable Presence to which it owes at once its life and its beauty. At the risk of wearying the reader, we cannot

forbear to add one other extract on the mutual adaptation of outward nature and the mind of man—a theme on which, sixteen years afterwards, his eloquent friend Dr Chalmers, in his Bridgewater Treatise, discoursed so sublimely. It occurs after a glowing description of Chambery :—

"I never passed two whole days together of something so near to happiness as I did among the mountains of Savoy; and though I was too delighted to think of it at the time, I have since been very much pleased to recognise in this a very striking confirmation of a favourite creed of mine. I am now more than ever convinced that there are no mental ills that may not be cured by a timely, a sincere, and a trusting recurrence to those medicines which lie everywhere scattered about for us among the forms and influences of nature; that in an inartificial state of society and manners, all the fancies, and feelings, and associations that come to the mind from the external world are expressly adapted, by their very nature, to meet and combine with others which previously existed in the mind itself, and to engender, by their union, powers and effects that could not have been produced in any other way; in fact, that the mind of man and the external world are made expressly *for* each other, as the sexes are in man and woman, and that powers and capabilities exist in each, which can never be properly and naturally

exerted but by the means and in the presence of those which belong to the other: that the mind is (almost literally) a musical instrument, whose tones can only be duly felt and brought out by meeting with corresponding tones in objects external from itself. I know that metaphysicians would laugh at all this; but I should not like it or believe it a bit the less on that account."

THE BLIND MUSICIAN.

"*Oct.* 5.—Before my departure from this village (Munich, near Berne), I listened for an hour to an old man, who played delightfully on an instrument like a flute, with the mouth-piece of a flageolet attached to its side. I know that in cases of this kind a person is not difficult to please, and that when the eye is delighted the ear is easily prevailed on to be so likewise. This may in some measure have been the case with me, for the mellow tones of a flute, even though waked by no skilful hand, are delightful when surrounded with hills, and at a distance from everything that gives a hint of the world being in existence. This old man was blind, and, like many blind men, happy—a case which, though often occurring, never ceases to excite my wonder and surprise. I think that were I blind myself I never could be happy again. Every footstep I should chance to hear going past would make my heart sick; and to know the time that the sun was setting,

without having the power to behold it, would make me wish for death. And yet the resources of my mind are not fewer than those of this poor ignorant peasant. I often think on the deprivation of sight, for I have a presentiment that the case will one day be mine. Yet the more I think of it the more fearful a thing does it become, and the more am I convinced of my own inability to be reconciled to such a destiny. I observed this old musician, when by himself, stop every twenty yards, and remain motionless for about a minute, turning his head a different way each time, and moving his lips as if he were speaking to himself. Perhaps he was recalling to his memory the appearance of the scene before him—the rich beauty of the winding valley, the sombre magnificence of the ancient forests, or the everlasting glory of the icy Alps, and haply for a moment he may have forgot that he was blind. Probably by doing this often, the idea of the landscape remained so constantly in his mind as to present itself always under the same appearance at the same resting-place, as much as if his eyes were not dark and sightless—'as if no drop serene had quenched their orbs, or dim suffusion veiled.'"

The wanderer among the mountains was after this no longer solitary. The following extract records a little incident, of which an American friend was the hero :—

AN EQUESTRIAN ADVENTURE.

"*Oct.* 10.—During this day's walk, P——, who, upon the whole, shews much more *pluck* than most of his countrymen, suffered much from fatigue and tender feet. For an hour or two we scarcely advanced more than a couple of miles per hour. Towards evening a fair Savoyard, *d'un certain age*, passed by on horseback, after the manner usual in Switzerland. After much argument, we induced P—— to request a seat behind the lady; so, having hailed her, we descanted at some length on the disabled state of the unfortunate foreigner, and, finally, persuaded her to take him with her the length of St Martin. He was, accordingly, mounted 'with difficulty and labour hard,' and the two departed on their way rejoicing. *We* had not proceeded far, however, before our eyes were attracted by an unusual spectacle. Either the saddle-girths had given way, or P—— with his cherry stick had tickled the fancy of the Alpine courser. Be that as it may, the twain were lying in the dust in a most deplorable condition, the horse peacefully grazing by the roadside, and the fair Savoyard, leaning over the exhausted Columbian, exclaiming, with clasped hands, '*O pauvre Anglais!—O pauvre enfant!*' Neither of them could give a very intelligible account of the manner in which the accident happened, and, fortunately, neither of them

was a bit the worse of it. After some time, they were both rehoisted on the unconscious beast, and reached their destination in safety, as happy as 'before the fall.'"

THE SCOTSMAN AND THE SWISS.

"*Oct.* 11.—During our walk this day we were fortunate enough to engage Jacques Balma (*des dames*), a celebrated guide who ascended with Saussure to the summit of Mont Blanc, as our conductor on the following day. He is a tall, hardy-looking man, with a dark complexion, a little bent by age, as he must be now upwards of sixty. Yet he scales the glaciers with all the activity of a man in the prime of life. I had a good deal of conversation with another very entertaining and intelligent countryman, with whom I walked for four or five miles. He informed me at some length regarding the state of agriculture in the valley, and what was more interesting to me, the manners and customs of people like himself. From everything that I heard from him, as well as from others, and from my own observation, I conceive the national character of the Scots and Swiss to be very similar. They agree in a spirit of independence and integrity, in contentment with their situation in life, acuteness of intellect and extent of information, a lively sense of religious duties, and in many of their local usages, manners, and superstitions. For every

one of these particulars both the above-mentioned nations are far superior to the French, and (not to speak it profanely) to the English. Enter into conversation with a Scotsman or a Swiss, and you are informed upon every subject of inquiry, to their extent of knowledge—sometimes, it must be confessed, rather in a round-about way by the former. They are devoid of that mean suspicion which characterises the common people of certain other countries. They perceive by your questions that you desire information, and they are happy to have it in their power to bestow it. Closely connected with this part of their character is their hospitality. Their door is open to the traveller, and their fare, such as it is, is laid before him. For such kindness they think that not even thanks are due; and short as your acquaintance with them has been, on taking leave they wish you happiness with all the earnestness and sincerity of old friends. Exhibitions of the human heart like these give joy that few things can equal, and instruction of no light kind. Often in former times, amid the mountains of Scotland, have I been the delighted guest of such hospitality; and short as my stay in Switzerland has been, I have had reason to admire the same feature of national character. Indeed, over all the world, the inhabitants of mountainous countries are famous for this virtue. As to the intellectual capacity of the different peoples of whom I speak, the most inattentive observer must

be forcibly struck with the superiority in favour of the Scots and Swiss. The peasantry of the former nation are perhaps superior to those of any other country in the world. That they are naturally acute and shrewd is certain, and that character they have always maintained, both at home and abroad. This natural acuteness is increased by their excellent education, and by the peculiar effects resulting from the reformation in religion."

CHAPTER III.

Invalidism and Italy.

"Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God who makes them heals."

—William Cowper.

"A lively curiosity is, in common circumstances, our prevalent feeling when we first approach countries which, however near to our own, may in some sense be termed another earth. A new language shouted by sailors, lisped by children, appearing in every kind of public inscription, with a change in dresses, countenances, vehicles, buildings, and all the variety of lesser objects, produce an impression which perhaps a Hibernian islander might state most forcibly by saying, 'You can't land twice for the first time.'"—John Sheppard.

THE tour of 1816 was followed by a visit to Paris, when he was intrusted with an important commission. It was the purchase for the University of Edinburgh of the series of ornithological specimens, now known as the Dufresne Collection. On his return he spent much of his time assisting Professor Jameson in the work of their arrangement, and the acquisition now forms one of the most beautiful and valuable treasures in the College Museum.

A good deal of his leisure was also occupied in another congenial employment. In 1816, *Blackwood's Magazine* had commenced its career, and to the first volumes Mr Wilson contributed many articles. The subjects which he usually selected were akin to his own tastes and pursuits as a lover of nature and of poetry, an angler, and an occasional tourist; but it is believed that he had a hand in not a few papers of pleasantry and humour, of which the individual or joint-stock authorship can no longer be ascertained.*

* In the list of Mr Wilson's publications given at the end of this volume, we have enumerated such contributions to *Blackwood* as we have been able to identify, with the kind assistance of John Blackwood, Esq., and of Mr Wilson's own family.

In 1819 he visited Sweden. To the enthusiastic young naturalist no pilgrimage could be more interesting than to the garden and the grave of the immortal Linnæus, and his historical knowledge would make the region romantic which at every turn called up the memories of Gustavus Vasa and Charles the Twelfth. But of his impressions no record survives. If, as is most likely, he kept notes at the time, the broken health and spirits of the following winter prevented him from making an extended transcript.

For soon after his return, symptoms of pulmonary disease exhibited themselves. With these were combined other depressing influences. Neither health nor inclination allowed him to carry his legal studies any further, and whilst the portion of goods which fell to a younger son made scanty provision for the future, that seductive study which had gradually absorbed all his heart and soul was more likely to diminish than augment the slender patrimony. To this must be added a cause of disquiet, which, although apparently insignificant, was to him very serious. A tendency to swelling in the face was the occasion of frequent pain and much discomfort, and was dwelt upon by a somewhat morbid imagination, until the fear that it might develop into something very dreadful lay on his mind a continual incubus. For these fears it turned out that there was no foundation, but still we think it worth while to record the circumstance. We fancy that many young

persons especially are haunted by nervous apprehensions, which, could they only summon courage to consult the competent authorities, would be instantly dispelled; and in a world where all our strength is needed for the real struggle, it is a pity to have any portion of our energies swallowed up in curable anxieties or chimerical forebodings.

Betwixt invalid depression and the uncertainty of his plans and prospects, the interval which followed his twenty-fourth year was one of much inward sadness. He had not yet the blessed hope which afterwards upbore him beneath graver burdens; and though manly pride helped to sustain his infirmity in the presence of others, and the social instinct enabled him occasionally to forget it, the load at his heart was heavy.

As the best preservative from the consumptive tendency detected in his chest, he was advised to spend a winter in Italy. His two unmarried sisters accompanied him, and the change proved to some extent beneficial. But it needed more than the witchery of Italian skies and southern breezes to chase away the evil spirit of melancholy; and the following record will shew that it was a very dull departure:—

"Left Edinburgh on the morning of Tuesday, August 2, 1820, with every degree of disinclination for the journey. From some perversity of mind, all my former feelings in regard to an Italian tour had suffered a complete reversal;

and instead of regarding it as the most beautiful region of the world, I now felt as if it contained no one interesting feature. Whatever may be the result of the journey, this want of foretaste of pleasure is a great misfortune. At least, in every other tour which I have hitherto made, I have found the joys of anticipation fully equal to those which resulted from the journey itself; and as in the present case my bad state of health will prevent my enjoying many pleasures which formerly constituted my greatest happiness, it is very likely that my enjoyment of the tour itself will be greatly diminished. Certain it is that I shall never again be able to produce in myself that state of mind in which the very thought of visiting the 'divine Italy' would have been sufficient to make me happy of itself alone. I have found myself grow older in body and more callous in mind within these last six months than I had hoped to be in the natural progress of half a century. I look back upon the joy which I used to receive from the beauties of nature, and from the mere feeling of life, as to trains of sentiment which I had experienced only in sleep; and, when I contrast my past with my present state, I have some difficulty in being convinced of my personal identity."

However, the mere locomotion soon began to produce a good effect; for at Liverpool we find him indulging a little waggery at the expense of its citizens:—

"Your Liverpool dandies are not the thing. Their cravats are good, so are their coats, their breeches still better, and the creatures have tolerable legs; but still their gait exhibits a sympathetic mingling with the long shanks of the three-legged stool utterly destructive of the true style. A dandy out of London, I verily believe, is like a fish out of the water. He may fly for a few hundred yards with some effect, but ere long he will either exhibit characters incompatible with the dandy state, or sink at once into the blue profound of his native element. Even Edinburgh, with its superb terrace, is all unfit; and then, the science of Schneiderism is there unknown—amidst the total eclipse not a beam of light falls on the needle of one masterly artificer. Besides, an essential dandy has no more to do with time than he has with eternity. The observance of stated periods, or any law of necessity, is destructive to the very existence of the character which he aims at; and being obliged to do any one thing is just the same as being obliged to resign all pretensions to a seat in the court and parliament of dandies. Now, smelling rum or *tearing* cotton, running at one time to the quay, at another to the custom-house, is to a merchant a work of necessity. The Liverpool men are merchants, and consequently, whatever they may think, not dandies in the genuine sense of the term. Unless a man has it in his power to drive out in his chariot or tilbury every day of the year, and at any

hour of the day, the chances are much against his ever becoming an unadulterated dandy."

When he had passed the Pillars of Hercules, and found himself among the new appearances and influences of the great inland sea, the spirit of the voyager revived.

"*Sept.* 1.—Since we entered the Straits, we have found the climate quite another thing. When the wind does blow, it comes upon us as if from a sea of warm milk—how different from the easterly gales of Caledonia! The heat is now, indeed, rather too great for anything like comfort in the cabin; but then we have got a spare sail rigged up upon four poles over the quarter-deck, so that we may enjoy the sea breezes under a delightful awning from morn to night. This evening several porpoises rushed past us at a gallop, and most opportunely raised a flock of flying-fish within a few yards of the vessel. They fly in a straightforward arrowy fashion, somewhat in the style of the kingfisher, and their sides glitter like fine silver. I took them at first for a flock of sandpipers flying towards the shore.

"*Sept.* 8.—There have been many of Mother Carey's chickens in the wake of the vessel all day. Took a shot at one, and brought him down—the first I have handled in a recent state. I observed that the eye is furnished with a nictitating membrane, like an owl's, which I don't remember to have seen in the description of the bird.

These petrels kept flying astern of the vessel till it was too dark to see; but how they spend the night I can't say. It cannot be on shore, for we were twenty or thirty miles from land. They seemed never to rest on the water, unless when they discovered the crumbs of cheese and biscuit, or pieces of bacon which we threw for them overboard, and then they settled on the water to enjoy their prize at leisure. They frequently just touched the water like a swallow, which they greatly resemble with their wings hovering in the air and bent back; and they then appeared as if picking up their food from the surface.

"*Sept.* 14.—Saw four pilot-fish under the bows. They are very beautiful creatures, coloured with alternate bands of transparent bluish green and rich crimson brown, varying in the sun to beryl-green and blood-red. Saw a pale ghost-like fish glide past like a shadow, at a great depth under water. Signor Shark shewed himself to-day for a moment or two, far beneath the surface; so did not think it prudent to trust myself to the bosom of the deep. Towards evening a vast flock of flying-fish rose at a distance of some hundred yards to windward of the vessel. They were immediately pursued with hue and cry by the whole posse of gulls, and these no sooner drove them into the water than they were attacked by the bonitos, who drove them back into the air, leaping after them to the

height of several feet. Thus persecuted above, and finding no rest below, they seemed to attempt a middle course, and just flirted over the sea, sometimes in and sometimes out, according as their aërial or aquatic tyrants proved the most relentless. This singular, though most unfair, pursuit seemed to reverse the order of nature; for in their eagerness the gulls frequently darted with their finny prey beneath the waves, whilst with still greater impetuosity the bonitos sprung after them into the atmosphere. A harder lot than that of a flying-fish under such circumstances, I do not know. Its state is a degree worse than that of the animal which 'dies on the land, and cannot live in the water.'

"*Sept* 15, *Friday.*—The wind is fair and the weather fine, and if matters remain as they are now for a couple of days longer, we shall surely behold Genoa in all its pride of place. There has been another *superficial* war waging to-day between the gulls, bonitos, and flying-fish. Some albicores also favoured us with their company for several hours, and the beautiful pilot-fish again shewed themselves alongside. During a former voyage, our vessel was attended by eleven albicores for two entire days. They followed her into Genoa, and were every one caught by the natives. I suspect that the reason which both they and the bonitos would assign for following ships, is their greater chance of securing the smaller fish,

which are frightened to either side by the advance of the vessel. They thus have a command over more water than if they were pursuing a solitary course.

"*Port of Genoa, Sept.* 19, *Tuesday.*—'Murder will out.' On the 11th of this month, when at sea, I missed my pocket-book from a little shelf above my berth, where I usually imprudently let it lie. It contained bills and money to a considerable amount, besides letters, &c. I went through the form of searching the trunks of every one on board, not so much in the hope of finding it, as with an intention to lull the fears of the real offender, so that I might secure him with it about his person on some future day. Our search was vain; not a trace of bill or bank-note to be found: the pocket-book had fled for ever, 'and left me on the earth disconsolate.' I then stuck up an advertisement, offering a reward of five guineas to any one who should recover, or lead to the recovery, of the stolen goods; but to no effect. My suspicion was naturally turned upon two of our crew; *first*, the steward, a mulatto, always in the cabin, and probably aware of my hiding-place; *secondly*, one of the sailors called Williams, by birth a Dane, who was almost the only one of the sailors ever in the cabin, where he had been regularly employed twice-a-week in scrubbing out the floor. His character seemed that of a careless buffoon, always joking and singing, and seldom making his appearance on deck without exclaim-

ing, 'Here comes Williams as usual without a halfpenny to bless himself.' All hands in the cabin suspected the steward, because he had naturally a cloud upon his brow, but I thought I could perceive a deeper shade over the greasy forehead of the 'royal Dane.' As soon as we got into harbour, Captain H—— and I determined that our best plan was to dismiss these two men as suspected persons, with full leave to carry off themselves and baggage when and wheresoever they chose; the chances being that, if they were the offenders, some trace of the theft would be in their possession. In the meantime, upon a preconcerted signal, four *gens d'armes* were to be in waiting, and as soon as our friends stepped on shore they were to be arrested, carried to the guard-room close by, and carefully searched. On Monday night, however, when we were at tea, our friend Williams and the cook went off in the long boat without leave asked, and stayed away all night. They came on board again next morning, both intoxicated, but made off for the second and last time while we were at breakfast. My suspicion of Williams now became very strong. I traced him without any delay to an obscure drinking-shop, called the 'Jolly Sailor,' and having heard the moment I landed that he had changed several bank-notes, my opinion was confirmed. So off I set in pursuit, with three *gens d'armes*, and one or two assistant civilians. We discovered the rascals

drunk and asleep, and found that Williams was actually the robber, and that he had consigned my property as his own proper prize-money to the care of the landlord, who immediately delivered the same to me. On the part of the thief, I think I never knew a robbery more daring in its commencement, or more idiotically managed in its conclusion; but, to use the words of the suspected steward, 'Providence made Williams get drunk, that the character of the innocent might be cleared.' The pocket-book itself, with several letters and other documents, had very prudently been thrown overboard."

In 1821, Mr Wilson returned from Italy; but his health was still feeble, and for the next two years he was to all intents an invalid. Even his favourite pursuit ceased to rouse him, and the journeys which he took from time to time were so far a penance as they were part of the doctor's prescription. However, the summer of 1822 transferred him for change of air to Corstorphine, and in the pretty neighbouring villa of Corstorphine Hill he found a family whose society did more for his resuscitation than could have been done by the skill of all the faculty. Of that attractive circle the charm soon began to concentrate, and in Miss Isabella Keith the wanderer discovered such a union of engaging attributes as supplied a new mainspring to his own existence, and thenceforward

made Corstorphine Hill magnetic. The friendship thus pleasantly commenced was followed up in the correspondence of the following winter, and, even before its inevitable consummation, it exerted the happiest influence on Mr Wilson. Not only had he alighted on a kindred spirit to whose bright and gentle intuition his varying mood of mind, whether grave or gay, lay open (and it is a great comfort to be understood); but amidst the more serious thoughts with which he was now familiar, he had found a guide whose firmer faith and endearing goodness helped him to rise to a higher level. The first of the following letters to his "cousin," as he chose to misname her, accompanied a collected edition of Wordsworth's Poems:—

"*Christmas-day*, 1822.

"DEAR AND GOOD COUSIN,—As you were so kind as to listen very patiently during the last autumn to a great deal of ill-expressed praise of William Wordsworth, my 'mind's father,' I think it my duty that you should speedily be enabled to judge of his extraordinary merits more fully and at leisure.

"You will perceive that many of these poems, of no striking interest at first or taken singly, will grow upon you and increase in value when you come to view them in connexion with each other, and as belonging to the same system of thought; and if the atheism and impiety

of such lads as Shelley and Lord Byron tend—as they certainly must and ought to do—to diminish the pleasure derived even from their better works, so, on the other hand, should the noble faith and the pure practice of such a man as Wordsworth, render our delight the greater in studying even the least important of his. So read them, cousin, at your leisure, without disinclination to be pleased. Judge for yourself, and take no heed of those who sit in the chair of the scorner, combating a phantom of childishness and insipidity, which their own obtuse and imbecile ignorance has created. Should you at any time meet with what you cannot understand, *be humble*, and attribute such a misfortune to your own weakness rather than to his, and you will find your reward; for he is one of the master spirits, and there is reason in all his thoughts.

"My only fear now is, that I may have written somewhat too much of this, and that you may be disappointed. However, I trust to time and your own reflections. Don't rely upon first impressions where these are unfavourable, but rather wait: the light will break in by degrees. For I believe that the exercise of the creative faculty is not confined to the works alone of any original genius; he must, in a great degree, create the taste itself, especially where, as in modern poetry, there is much that is false and unstable. At least, the perception and relish of what

is good improve in proportion to the supply; 'as if increase of appetite did grow by what it fed on,' as was once observed of the late Dr W——, he being then employed on his fifth plate of turtle-soup."

"*Saturday Night.*

"DEAR COUSIN,—I have just been informed, when it is nearly two hours too late, that I might have gone to Maitland Street to-day to dinner, where I should have enjoyed good mutton, a glass of ale, glorious tea, and the society of your sister Nancy (I have missed out the Miss by mistake). I would have given anything to have gone out, having been in a very strange unsettled humour all day, and unable to do anything but laugh at the robin for trying to swallow the tail of a live mouse, which the dear innocent takes for a worm. Hee! hee! hee! Why don't you laugh?

"Howze yir toothache? I was very sorry to learn by your last despatch that you were suffering from a renewal of that painful malady. They say it is a worm in the tooth. If you would let cock-robin sleep in your mouth for a single night, he would effect a permanent and radical cure; but then, his charges are high.

"I feel considerable trepidation in alluding to your request to see some scraps of miscellaneous poetry. Your demand, it would seem, is either to be 'granted gener-

ously, or refused gently.' Most alliterative of ill-tempered Tibbies!

'How high her honour holds her haughty head!'
(HOPKINS?)

If you but

'Viewed the vileness of my *vicked* verse,'

you would at once admit that there is to the full as much 'generosity' in the refusal as there could be gentleness in the 'granted.' But, to speak as they do in the dog-star, that is *siriusly*, I will tell you a fact, which you will perhaps consider only in the light of a fiction, to wit—— but, in the meantime, I must go *ben* to my tea, for I hear the 'great Tom:' so, please, wait for the fact for five minutes.

"Well, as I was saying, I will tell you a great fact, to wit, the primal and most indispensable law in the composition of poetry is that there must be a preponderance both in mind and body of pleasurable sensation, otherwise the result is necessarily cold, feeble, forced, and valueless. Now, cousin, notwithstanding many sources of pleasure still open to me, and for which I ought to be, and in fact am, very grateful, yet my usual and prevailing feelings are, and, I believe, must ever be, the reverse of pleasureable; from which statement I leave you to draw the inference, that that which a man cannot write, neither can he send.

"To continue. Hem! I begin in fact to change my mind regarding poetry and poetical perception, always excepting the great god Pan, who lives in a cottage in Westmoreland. 'His soul is like a star, and dwells apart.' He is to be worshipped as the Guebres do the sun, his brightness to be gloried in, his spots (for such there are in the most splendid luminaries) to be left unrecorded. There should be no Herschel in poetry. For myself, I eat too much to be sentimental; a pound of beef or mutton daily, and half a pound of fish, potatoes, and other garniture, are too substantial accompaniments to the ethereal essence of poetic inspiration—not to speak of cheese. I do not, however, despise the sweet science. '*Toute au contraire,*' as they say in the Highlands. 'I own the soft impeachment;' but it is often too sublimated for my stultified understanding, which pants in vain for something like a distinct conception, and loves not for itself alone the 'unmeaning melody of sweetest sound.'"

"*March* 1823.

"DEAR COUSIN,—I received the *libri tre.* I hope you did not hurry yourself with them, or read them at any time when you would have preferred something else, merely for the sake of returning them soon. I send *tre altri,* which you can read at your leisure, and try to find some amusement from them. Some people contrive (like

bum-bees on the top of a thistle) to find 'good in everything.' I have little doubt you are one of those. By the by, if the assertion were true as given in the first part of the line last quoted—'sermons in stones'—what a pitiable life must be led by a mineralogist! for we could scarcely expect that every piece of slate, grauwacke, or whinstone, would turn out a Chalmers or Thomson. Quartz would make a *pint* of being as dry as Dr. Grant [Granite]. Hee-hee!

"I rushed over (in a hackney coach) to the Wernerian Society last Saturday, and was so bold, besides transacting my own especial business, as to stay to the meeting. I got a bit of a fright, however; for the first paper read, I found, was an attack upon myself—that is, upon certain doctrines which I had advocated in a paper read to, and published by, the society some years ago: so that I was obliged in my own defence, and in spite of that great degree of modesty which I possess, and which I hope you have observed, and give me due credit for, to get up and make the following excellent speech from a corner, in a low and plaintive voice:—

"'Mr President,—Sir.' But it would be egotistical were I to proceed any further."

In his paper on the *Falconidæ* Mr Wilson had maintained the specific distinctness of the golden eagle (*Aquila*

chrysäetos), and the ring-tailed eagle (*Falco fulvus* of Buffon). This view was controverted on the occasion above humorously referred to, by P. S. Selby, Esq., of Twizell House, now well known throughout the scientific world as the author of "Illustrations of British Ornithology," and for thirty years one of Mr Wilson's most valued friends. Our author, however, did not willingly abandon his theory. The following letter, addressed to Sir William Jardine, Bart., besought the benefit of his information:—

"53 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
11*th March* 1823.

"Dear Sir,—I ought, perhaps, to apologise for troubling you with this letter; but as I know your attachment to those studies to which it relates, I have little doubt you will excuse me. There was recently read to the Wernerian Society a paper by Mr Selby, the object of which was to prove the identity of the ring-tailed and golden eagles. Mr S. considers the former as the young of the latter. As this opinion is at variance with the one which I had advocated some years ago in a paper on the genus *Falco*, published in the Wernerian Transactions, and with the sentiments which I still maintain, I drew up an answer to Mr Selby's communication, and gave at the same time a general account of the different opinions entertained on this disputed point. These opinions are three in number. 1st, The old notion, which maintains that the golden and

ring-tailed eagles are distinct. 2dly, That which prevailed pretty generally in France some years ago—namely, that the golden eagle is the young of the ring-tailed eagle; and, 3dly, The opinion of more recent origin, now strengthened by the concurrence of Mr Selby, that the ring-tail is the young of the golden eagle. The first opinion is the one which I have adopted. The second, I have endeavoured to refute chiefly by shewing that if the golden eagle were the young of the ring-tail, it would not only be as common as that species, but much more so; because, if every pair of adult ring-tailed eagles breed once in the year, and produce two young at a brood, and if these young require three years to attain their perfect plumage (as the advocates of this opinion have stated), then it follows that at the lapse of every period of three years, there would be three pair of young golden eagles for every single pair of adult ring-tailed eagles which existed at the commencement of that period—in other words, that the golden eagle would be three times more common than the ring-tailed eagle. The reverse of which, however, is really the case—the ring-tailed eagle being six or eight times more common than the golden eagle.

"The third opinion escapes the objection arising from the disparity in point of numbers, which I think insuperable in regard to the second opinion, but in many other respects it is equally if not more objectionable than that

opinion. I endeavoured, first, upon general principles, to shew that the ring-tail was not the young of the golden eagle, in so far as the plumage of the tail was composed of distinct portions or bands of black and white, a disposition of colour which is characteristic of maturity, or, at least, which is never perceived in the young of any species, in the adult individual of which (like the mature golden eagle) there is on the same part a mingled combination of comparatively obscure and less strongly contrasted colours. This argument I illustrate and enforce at considerable length, though I shall not, at present, trouble you with the details. I also argue against the one being the young of the other from this circumstance among others, that in Low's 'Fauna Orcadensis,' which contains a list of the Orkney birds, the result of a twenty years' residence in those islands, the ring-tailed eagle is described as pretty frequent, but no mention is made of the golden eagle as an inhabitant of the Orkney Isles. I add, that the same circumstance occurs in the island of Iona, where I have observed the ring-tailed eagle as an *adult* breeding bird, occupying the least accessible of the eyries, but where I could neither observe nor collect any information regarding the occurrence of the golden eagle. My reason for troubling you with all this is, that I understood you have had in your possession a live golden eagle for some time, and that you procured him while young.

If so, what is his present plumage compared to that which he formerly bore? Did his tail bear the white ring at the base, and has it now disappeared (as Mr Selby asserts it to do)? Is he now a mature golden eagle, corresponding to the descriptions usually given of that bird by authors? Do you, upon the whole, adhere to the original belief of these birds being distinct, or do you rather incline to Mr Selby's notion of their being one and the same? I shall be at all times happy to procure for you any information in my power which you may be desirous of obtaining from this quarter in furtherance of your ornithological pursuits, and I beg again to apologise for the liberty I have taken.—I remain, &c.,

"JAMES WILSON."

An appeal to the king of birds himself confirmed the conclusions of the Northumbrian ornithologist;* but the above letter was the renewal of an acquaintance which ripened into a life-long friendship, confirmed by mutual esteem as well as kindred tastes, and not a little conducive to the happiness both of Sir William and his correspondent. Neither the lordly apartments of the Royal Society, nor the collections of the College Museum and Library, could have furnished a more delightful retreat to a *savant*

* Sir William's eagle sat for its portrait, which now forms Plate 2 of Mr Selby's "Illustrations."

studiously disposed, than Mr Wilson might have found amongst the inexhaustible books and specimens of Jardine Hall, nor would it have been any drawback that ichthyological illustrations were supplied by Annan Water more recent, if not as rare as the stuffed *salmonidæ* in the endless cabinets. But it was not till late in life that, although frequently invited, he was able to pay a lengthened visit to this hospitable abode. It was in 1854, when preparing materials for the press; and he exceedingly enjoyed its cheerful seclusion, as well as the extensive apparatus so luxuriously at hand in this great repertory of everything pertaining to zoological science.

In the meanwhile, however, notwithstanding such episodes as the eagle controversy, and despite the gaiety of his familiar epistles, his strength was imperfectly restored, and the depression of spirit, with which he never ceased to contend, he could not always conceal. In the autumn of 1823, he visited Ardencaple, the residence of his intelligent and heartily appreciating friend, Lord John Campbell, and spent some time cruising in the yachts of Lord Willoughby de Broke and James Smith, Esq. of Jordanhill. With one or two of the letters then written we conclude this section of his history. Mournful as is the tone of the first extract, we think it better not to withhold it. Perhaps to some "shipwrecked brother" it may prove a footstep in the sand. Few that saw the

affluent sunshine of Mr Wilson's later life could imagine that it once had to struggle up from such a sea of sorrow.

TO MISS ISABELLA KEITH.

"LARGS, *August* 1823.

"Every day convinces me of the irremediable imbecility of my own mind, and every attempt to throw it off overthrows myself. It has been with the greatest difficulty for some days past that I have been able to understand the slightest thing. Pain, weakness, and misfortune may distract the mind, and render it insensible to the purest and holiest enjoyments; and of the degree of blame attachable in such cases, God alone can judge, because He alone knows *all;* and I believe you will find it admitted in some of your own favourite authors, that it may certainly please God to permit a diseased or morbid sensibility of frame, whether corporeal or mental, to mar Christian joy even to the very grave. Why I should be as I am, I cannot say,—because at present we 'see through a glass darkly;' though the time will come when we shall know even as we are known. In the meantime, let us judge each other in charity: 'faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.'

"I have been here since last Thursday, and although everything within doors is just as I would wish it, I have

not yet in any way recovered the knack of enjoying myself; but as my hopes were small, my disappointment has not been great. I have scarcely been out since I came here; I feel unable to read, I can't write, and I see no use in staring at the ships. The scenery, I have no doubt, is beautiful; I don't feel it to be so, but I am thankful there are no setting suns. There is but one sight in nature which is still too much for my spirit to bear, and that is the setting sun. At the close of a summer evening, when all around is quiet and hushed, and when the western sky gleams with the lovely hues of departing glory, I look upon the calm magnificence of heaven, and at that moment wish I had never been called into existence. The crimson clouds of an evening sky make my heart sick, and my mind is never more perturbed by ghastly visions than amid the fairy light of a setting sun. Yet I once loved it—not wisely, but too well. Though time has now broken the delusion, still I never can forget what I have felt when a fiery sun slowly sank behind the purple mountains, and seemed to leave the world in a blaze of glory. I saw there a splendid emblem of a great man's death; for the career of virtue is brightest when about to lead into heaven. I felt a throb that told me not to be ashamed to stand erect in the creation of God, and I could have wept with sublime joy to think that I might widen the sphere of virtue, and

in the next world remember something that I had done in this."

Our next extract is in a sprightlier vein. It is from a letter headed, "Scene—At sea. Time—Night. Motto—'My home is on the ocean.' Air—Very cold."

"I have a thousand thanks, good cousin, for your letter, which was a great treat in my present sojourn in the land of strangers. It was sent up to me from Inverness. There is, however, in that northern metropolis, another James Wilson, who opened my letter, and, after no doubt reading it through to his infinite edification, closed it again, adding on the outside the gratifying intelligence, 'Opened by, but not for, James Wilson, Inverness.' You need not, however, jump at this, and hold up the palms of your hands; for it was Jane's letter that was examined, as it came one or two days before, and by the time yours arrived, the post-office people were aware of my existence in their neighbourhood.

"You tell me to tell you how I am. I am happy to inform you that I sleep by night and thrive by day. I am, however, shocked to add that I have been severely afflicted by the loss of my customary glass of ale, which does not seem to abound either in the west or the north countries. There is, to be sure, plenty of porter, spruce beer, ginger beer, your common beer, all kinds of wines and spirituous liquors, and, to make use of a Brussels

phrase, 'punches as in England;' so that I have no reasonable cause of complaint. But you know the perversity of human nature; for, as your mother used to say, 'When Isabella was ill, nothing would satisfy her but pickled mussels.' Well, I feel in regard to my ale exactly as you used to do as to your pickled mussels, with this painful distinction, that there is here no maritime Tibby to minister to *my* wants. I have seen many a magnificent mountain, and many a romantic old castle, 'holding its dark communion with the clouds,' but I agree with Gray in preferring to all of these,

'The long-resounding *ale*, and fretted vault.'

It was certainly a very noble idea to suppose the very roof of the cellar adorned with stalactites of petrified foam from the bottles and the barm of many centuries."

The last of the series is dated Sept. 10, 1823:—

"I don't know at all where I am going to at present. I am now in my old friend Mr Smith's vessel, the *Orion;* but as it is a matter of indifference to me which way she turns her prow, I don't wish to disturb the silence of the scene by asking impertinent questions. It is so calm that we scarcely move. We lie somewhere between America and the Laird of Lamont's, and have been for this last day or two enjoying the only truly summer weather we have had since I left home.

"'Tother night I went to a ball at Brisbane House, chiefly that I might enjoy as much as possible the society of Billy ——. He is just the very man I stood in need of. People wonder what I see about him, but they are asses, and he is an angel. His age is sixty-three. His person, face, and figure are, seriously speaking, not to be distinguished by the nicest eye from that of the late Dr ——; indeed, between ourselves, I have reason to believe that it is the Doctor himself. He is, however, not nearly such a fool as he looks like; the late Doctor, that is. He talks of nothing but eating and drinking, and is alike powerful in both; and having lately spent a fortune on French cooks and gourmanderie, he now billets himself alternately on one or other of the members of the Yacht Club, and keeps cruising about for an appetite the greater part of the year. I saw by the first glimpse which I got of his beautiful nose, which I almost mistook in the twilight for an aurora borealis, that he was the 'properest man on earth' for me, and I soon found my most sanguine hopes realised. As a Dutch pilot once said to me, 'Wat is zoo zoet als vriendschap?'* so I have found in the affection of Billy ——. I took him with me to Ardencaple, where I completed my conquest by three several acts of kindness, which my influence with the housekeeper enabled me to bestow on him—roasted pork, boiled partridges, and fried

* "What is so sweet as friendship?"

grouse gizzards. F——, who arrived the second night, nearly cut me out by talking of stewed dotterel. If he could have produced them on the table it would have been all over with me; but Billy has seen too much of the world not to know that a bird on the plate is worth a million on the moor, and so I still continued lord of the ascendant. However, his friend's yacht was obliged, some days ago, to take her departure for the south, and bore my beautiful Billy from my distracted view.

"I was very happy (for me) during my stay at Ardencaple. It is a delightful old place, with 'gray monastic towers,' embosomed in wood, built on a peninsula on the banks of a salt-water loch, and backed by fine mountains. They made me feel quite at home, just as I was at Corstorphine Hill, and were truly kind. I must have been but a tiresome inmate, yet I could not get away on my present cruise without promising to come back.

"I sincerely hope you are all enjoying yourselves at the Hill, and that your mother is constantly on the wing between the house and the garden, pulling bird-seed, setting her trap, and rearing her callow young, concerning which you never condescend to give me any detail. Is Bunny minor alive, and Bunny major kicking? Have there been any ants this year on the top of the thistle? How is your aunt, Miss Keith? As I scarcely expect to hear again from any of my own family, let me know at once if Robin

is dead. No particulars, but merely the fact that he is not in 53 Queen Street. Of Shilly I have less fear; he is in better hands; at the same time, if he too should have lost his life as well as his tail, make a clean breast of it: my forgiveness is unbounded where there is no *malice prepense.*

"This morning, soon after sunrise—it was a morning worthy of paradise—I landed for an hour in Brodick Bay, in Arran, and walked up a valley which would do honour to the central glories of Switzerland. The hunters might be up in Arabia, but the few cottages which nature rather than art seemed to have placed in the centre of this magnificent solitude, gave no sign of life. It seemed as if the creative sun, which gladdens all the other valleys of the earth, had never darted his beams over the gigantic battlements of those desert dwellings. The cottages were scarcely distinguishable from the gray crags of granite which lay scattered around them. A few aged sycamores, where 'ruin greenly dwelt,' overshadowed some grassy plots where cattle might have pastured, had death and desolation not reigned supreme. I had finally made my way into the centre of this enormous grave; the morning, as I thought, was growing darker and darker still. I feared 'total eclipse,' and was about to retrace my steps toward the narrow pass by which I had entered, at this time entirely concealed by a rocky barrier, when all at once a low sweet

voice was heard from the stump of an elder-tree, and the beautiful dark-eyed bird, the soother of many an hour of weary solitude, stood confessed before me. I could scarcely resist the first sudden impulse which had almost driven me towards him. He seemed to bend his radiant eyes upon me, as if he had recognised an ancient friend, and I sat down upon the grass, and listened to his plaintive melody as intently as if nothing else had existed in the world but himself and me. The gray crags and castellated clouds, and that secluded valley, so magnificent in its deathlike solitude, were at once forgotten. I had a confused remembrance of a darkened chamber, and some scattered books, and the same gorgeous breast and lustrous eye, and most melancholy voice, and I could have sat for ever. But at last I rose, and, as I left the valley, the beautiful creature seemed to deepen and yet extend the compass of its voice, as if it knew no end; and the last and only sound which I heard in that sublime region was the song of that single solitary bird. I then gained the mouth of the valley, and descended to the sea-shore; and I said to myself, 'If I have elbow-room in the cabin, I shall tell my cousin about this delightful creature:' and I have done so now."

CHAPTER IV.

Woodbille: Its Pets and its Pursuits.

"Oh speak the joy! ye whom the sudden tear
Surprises often, while you look around,
And nothing strikes your eye but sights of bliss;
An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven."

—THOMSON.

"He (Cowper) had at one time five rabbits, three hares, two guinea-pigs, a magpie, a jay, and a starling; besides two goldfinches, two canary-birds, and two dogs. It is amazing how the three hares can find room to gambol and frolic (as they certainly do) in his small parlour. I forgot to enumerate a squirrel, which used to play with one of the hares continually."—LADY HESKETH.

EIGHTEEN hundred and twenty-four was the year which changed the imaginary "cousin" of the foregoing correspondence into an actual wife, and commenced the happier half of Mr Wilson's history.

With a very superior understanding, and with accomplishments of a high order, Mrs Wilson was able to appreciate her husband's rare endowments. Fond of natural history herself, she entered, with wifely zeal, into his various pursuits—his gardening, his literary labours, his zoological friendships; and there was nothing beautiful in nature or grand in authorship of which her appreciation, so quick and true, did not double the enjoyment. At the same time, as already indicated, her earlier experience of the hopes and consolations conveyed in the gospel made her pre-eminently a help-meet to one whose spirit was now prepared to welcome a joy which the world can neither give nor take away, and whose reserved but keenly observant nature required, rather than sermons or books, the light of a living epistle; and, long before going hence, she had the happiness of knowing how entire was that unison

which purifies all other tastes, and survives all other relations.

Soon after their marriage, they took up their abode at Woodville; and it would be difficult to imagine a more charming retreat than, in Mr Wilson's possession, Woodville became. Within a Sabbath-day's journey of his place of worship, the New Greyfriars' Church, it was still nearer to George Square, the dwelling-place of his venerable uncle, and, ere long, of one of his dearest and most valued friends, Dr R. K. Greville, and scarcely a bowshot from the fine old Grange, where Sir T. D. Lauder might be found any day, spinning Highland yarns, or overhauling his fishing-tackle. But, whilst half an hour could transport him to the College Museum or the rooms of the Royal Society, within his own inclosure he had all the delights of a sylvan solitude. By good engineering a domain of two acres was made to supply, in respectable proportions, orchard and lawn, flower-garden and shrubbery; and snugly ensconced amidst the groves of Morningside, it caught the whole sunshine of the winter noon, forgetful of biting blasts and easterly fogs. In front the cottage exhibited little more than the windows of its two public rooms; but, internally, it was a commodious habitation, and gave scope to that hospitality dear to the heart of the owner, but for which there is not always space in the "cottage of gentility." The library was, withal, the dining-

room; but, as befitted a philosopher's sanctuary, its intellectual features predominated. Like Sir Walter Scott, who used sometimes to write with sunshine on the paper, Mr Wilson held that "light is pleasant," and betwixt a southern window and the fire stood the writing table at which most of his work was done. At one end of the room was a much-cherished purchase of his youthful ambition, the cabinet which eventually held the entomological spoils of nearly half a century; the remaining wall-space being occupied with the works of Cuvier and Lamarck, Dumeril and Bibron, "The British Birds" of Donovan, "The Ornithologia Toscana" of Savi, "The German Insects" of Panzer, and all the apparatus of a general zoologist. As the genius of the place, from above the mantel-piece flashed down the animated form and fiery eye of Audubon; and, in his own corner, Wordsworth drooped his heavy brow and sombre face,—surrounded and surmounted by the effigies of Selby, and Cuvier, and Lucien Bonaparte, and other friends and correspondents.

Within these quiet precincts, and in the society of one whom every day made dearer, the mornings came welcome and the hours passed swiftly. The garden was itself an endless occupation; and the time not required for literary or scientific labour was absorbed in books. Amidst influences so friendly the heart of our invalid speedily revived. Although he was never to become a Hercules,

and although it is too likely that, from this period, seeds of mischief continued latent in his chest, his light, tall figure learned again to climb the hills and achieve long pedestrian journeys; and, dispelled by domestic happiness, and the growing clearness of a blessed hope, the shadows which had frequently hovered over his spirit fled away, occasional griefs notwithstanding. Nothing could be more enviable than the habitual serenity of his remaining years. Of the softness and tenderness acquired in the school of affliction, there remained enough to make him a son of consolation, with delicate perception of others' pain, and happy skill in comforting; at the same time, there was that habitual sunny-heartedness which, rejoicing with the joyful, brought new gladness into the midst of mirth, inspiring with added glee the children's sports and irradiating with its cordial suffusion the fireside circle.

Nor amongst the inhabitants of Woodville must we forget the owner's mute companions. Our own first acquaintance with himself was in 1838, when the apparition of a *coati mondi* and other curious creatures in the yard of the adjoining house in George Square convinced us that the Mr Wilson who had come to dwell next door must be "Mr Wilson the naturalist." As the reader will have perceived, by the affectionate inquiries regarding a redbreast and chaffinch in one of the foregoing letters, it was a strong attachment which he formed for such

favourites, whether furred or feathered; and to the store of his enjoyments they made a material contribution. But, like all favourites, they exercised a corresponding despotism. Not only had he to carry with him the coati mondi in his migrations from the country to the town, but he had often to surrender his own convenience to the whims of canine humourists or prima donnas sulking in their cages; and so devoted was he to a glow-worm, which he had fostered through many months, that he carried it with him during a long tour in 1853, and was greatly mortified when at last he lost it. He used to feed it at breakfast-time by placing it in an egg-shell on the table, and most likely the wrong shell had been put into the box, and the poor lampyris left to waste its brightness on the desert air of Skye. Of the robin above mentioned, some traits have been preserved in Mr Syme's beautiful volume on "British Song-Birds:"—

"We know a gentleman who last summer (1822) caught a young redbreast, one of a brood just flown, in his garden. A short time after, the bird was lost, several days elapsed and robin did not appear; when the gentleman, walking in the garden with a friend, saw a bird of this species, which he thought very like his, hopping among four or five others, that seemed to be all of the same age. He requested his friend not to move, and returned to the house for a few crumbs, which he held in

his hand, and calling '*Robbie!*' the bird appeared to recognise the name it had been accustomed to, perched upon his finger, and was instantly secured. The bird is now, May 1823, in full plumage and singing delightfully; he ranges at liberty through the room, for though he has a large, light, and airy cage, the door of which stands open, he seldom enters it. In the same room is a chaffinch, still more tame than the redbreast; also a titmouse and a mule bird; but the moment they are out of their cages, the redbreast pursues, attacks, and drives them from place to place, so that he remains cock of the room. If his master takes a seed of hemp, and calls '*Robbie,*' he instantly flies at it, picks it from between the finger and thumb, darts off, and this so rapidly that one cannot detect how he extracts the seed. He is very inquisitive, and it is amusing to observe him when anything is brought into the apartment, such as books, paper, &c. At first he advances with great caution; but finding the object motionless, he ventures nearer, hops round it, but never appears content till he has got upon it, and never quits it, unless disturbed, until he has examined it with the eye of a curious inquirer. One morning, a roll of paper, more than two feet long, being laid on the table, Robbie instantly saw it was a new object, flew to it, hopped round and round it several times, and at last, finding it impossible to satisfy himself without a narrower

inspection, he hopped in at the one end and out of the other."

Robbie came to an untimely end, having fallen the victim of a cat, which, in a ruthless moment, extinguished all his airs, and avenged the manes of many a worm. His less pugnacious contemporary, the chaffinch, survived for fifteen years, and "Shilly," as this old favourite was called, was very tame, and much attached to his master. When Mr Wilson spoke to him or approached his cage, he always crested up the feathers of his head, and warbled a peculiar song—a compliment which he never paid to any stranger, except to that man all-loving and by all beloved, the Rev. Daniel Wilkie. After becoming minister of the New Greyfriars', when Mr Wilkie paid his first visit to Woodville, he was shewn into a room where there was no one to receive him save Shilly; but on entering, the master of the house was delighted to find the intimacy which had already sprung up between his shy bird and his new pastor,—a love at first sight, in which the tiny physiognomist confessed the same spell which often subdued West Port savages, and which still makes his saintly name a sound of endearment in the cottages of Yester and Stonehouse. One morning, coming down to breakfast, Mr Wilson said, "I thought I saw Shilly among some other shilfias in the garden," and sure enough the cage was empty; but going out to the garden

his master called him by name, and instantly quitting a flock of his congeners, he returned to the hand of his owner, and resumed his life in the parlour. Such a captivity could not sour his spirit, and Shilly was a benevolent old bachelor. He would sometimes carry about his food in his bill, evidently desirous of sharing his morsel with others; and, probably unaware of the distinction between spiders and insects, he more than once brought his insect-loving patron choice specimens of the former, and pressed on his acceptance the dainty dish. To gratify this desire of feeding others was not difficult at Woodville. There was seldom a summer which did not leave upon the hands of its inhabitants orphan nestlings, or little "featherless" foundlings; and Shilly found scope for his kind assiduities in rearing one or other of these foster children.

Nothing came wrong. Hedgehogs and ichneumons, dogs and rabbits, pigeons and jackdaws, cockatoos and parrakeets, were equally welcome, and under a Noachian patriarchate, all lived in surprising harmony. To these must be added a host of occasional pensioners. Whenever he took "his walks abroad," the lord of the manor was sure to be followed by some of these humble retainers,—sparrows, finches, and redbreasts,—for whom he had pocketed a supply of bread at the breakfast-table, and who, in process of time, would bring to his feet and commend to his guardianship their rising families.

We confess that it was with such emotions as the sight of dumb creatures seldom awakens, that, in January last, we saw the few survivors of this gentle dominion—an owl from Borrowdale, suggestive of Coleridge and "Christabel," and a raven, the legacy of Dr Patrick Neill. Surely if the creation did not cease to groan, the lords of that creation would possess some joys to which they at present are strangers, if they moved about so benign in their bearing that the beasts of the field felt assured in their presence, and so bountiful in their alms-giving as to attach the very fowls of the firmament. As in the case of the poet Cowper—whom Mr Wilson in his playfulness and gentleness, as well as in his pensive and poetic attributes, so remarkably resembled—this love of the lower animals was only the outer zone of a comprehensive kindliness of nature, which, giving the loaf to the fellow-man, had crumbs for the fellow-creatures; and, as in the case of the Olney bard, the bread cast on the winds and the waters was found again. It was repaid in the friendly look of every season, and in the recognising responsive aspect of the whole creation. It came flying back on the wings of swifts and swallows; hints and reminiscences of it were warbled in Alpine solitudes, and in the glens of Arran; and the storms of December brought it home again to Woodville, tapping at the window, or twittering with a summery sound amidst the falling snow.

The graver pursuits of Woodville were different branches of natural history. To his entomological cabinet he continued to add till it became one of the largest private collections in Scotland; and in the cognate departments, his attainments were such as to leave him few equals in general zoological knowledge. For such employments the time was propitious. In popular taste there is a rotation of the sciences; and just as the century closed with Herschel and astronomy, and as the discoveries of Davy next gave eclat to chemistry, so, thirty years ago, and most likely as a consequence of the beautiful generalisations of Cuvier, animated nature began to attract the attention which had hitherto oscillated betwixt suns on the one side and atoms on the other. Splendid folios introduced to the drawing-rooms of peers and princes the creatures of other lands, in all their forms of beauty, grotesqueness, or magnificence; and whilst the pages of Jesse, Waterton, and Kirby amused the general reader, the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," and other clever compilations, brought the subject within the reach of the humblest resources; to which we must not forget to add the new spirit which began to pervade collections like the National Museum, and the gathering together of great animal assemblages in beautiful parks and gardens, of which the crowning specimen is now exhibited by the Zoological Society, in its magnificent menagerie.

It was at this time that Mr Wilson began to publish his "Illustrations of Zoology." It was a series of elaborate plates, of a large size, and accompanied by descriptive letterpress, and was designed to be a receptacle for new or remarkable species in the various classes of the animal kingdom. He was himself a good draughtsman, and in this work he had the assistance of an admirable artist, Mr P. Syme. One handsome volume was completed, but before he could proceed further, he had become committed to a more arduous undertaking.

The following letters throw some light on these pursuits, and they also shew the unselfishness and mutual helpfulness by which it were devoutly to be desired that all fellow-labourers in the fields of science were equally distinguished.

TO SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, BART.

"Woodville, Canaan, Edinburgh,
9th February 1827.

"Dear Sir William,—I this day had the pleasure to procure a copy of your work, and promised myself a high treat by my cottage fireside this evening; but having a meeting with Mr Lizars at Mr Blackwood's about my own concerns, I found, when half-way home, that I had put a wrong book under my arm, and left yours on Mr B.'s table. However, I shall send for it to-morrow morn-

ing. I have, some time ago, finished my text for my first number, and hope to get on quickly with the printing and other preliminaries. I am so anxious to represent my miscellaneous articles at full length as often as possible, that I have chosen a very large form, a sort of quarto, a good deal higher than broad, approaching to the folio form. The chief disadvantage of this is the great price of the paper, which, I am afraid, will make the work dearer than I had myself calculated upon. As I am only to have four plates, I hoped they might have been got up, letterpress and all, for at most ten or twelve shillings a number; but they talk of fifteen or sixteen as the lowest; which I am sorry for, as the public, however friendly, don't like such taxes. I think your own work very reasonable.

"I am anxious to have in an early number, if not the first, that long-tailed fellow, the quezal, from Vera Paez, to whose magnificent train, from my large paper, I could do ample justice. Mr Schenley, who brought the bird home, has kindly offered to procure me access to the specimen in London, which he presented to Mr Canning —that in the College Museum being incomplete in the plumage of the tail. But I would almost rather try my hand at the latter specimen than be at the trouble and expense of ordering a drawing to be made by some one whose skill I have not proved, and with whose performance I might not be satisfied. I was told, however, some

time ago, either by John Wilson or his wife, that a drawing had been made of Mr Schenley's specimen by Mr Syme, and, as he or she believed, for you. Now, perhaps, you will be so good as let me know, before I fix upon either getting some one in London to draw Mr Canning's, or doing one here myself, whether Mr Syme's drawing is your private property or not. In the former case, I would not, of course, make any inquiries at Mr Syme's; in the latter, I might be tempted to enter into some negotiation about it.

"*P.S.*—There is a New Holland gull in the Edinburgh Museum, with a deep-red bill, which I should like you to look at. It seems to agree with a bird described, if I remember right, in the 'Wernerian Memoirs,' by Dr Traill, under the name of *Larus Scoresbii.* I don't know whether it has yet been figured."

TO P. S. SELBY, ESQ.

"WOODVILLE, *5th February* 1828.

"DEAR Sir,—I had some thoughts of figuring ere long Brunnich's Guillemot (which you will find described in Temminck's 'Manuel,' p. 924), as the distinctions between it and *Uria troile* have not been sufficiently illustrated. I find, however, that it occurs in the Orkney Islands, and have no doubt it will also be found along our own shores. Do you consider it as a British bird? If so, and if you

propose figuring it in your own work, I shall either not meddle with it, or shall reserve my drawing for your use, in the event of your not being able to get a better elsewhere. I intend to lay it down as a rule not to meddle with the British birds, to which at all times you do such ample justice; and, that I may adhere the more strictly to this intention, I shall be obliged by your letting me know at your leisure whether you propose to publish the capercailzie (cock and hen), as Professor Jameson lately expressed a wish that I should figure those in the Museum. As the species was not included in your first part—'Land Birds'—he probably thought you did not intend having anything to do with them. However, as I would rather see them in your work than in my own, I shall be guided by what you say.

"I lately received a beautiful drawing of a live ocelot from Liverpool, and an extraordinary fish (of the genus *Syngnathus*) from New Holland."

TO SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, BART.

"Elleray, Bowness, Kendal,
2*d December* 1828.

"Dear Sir William,— When I came through Penrith I made inquiries for an old collector of the name of Graham, from whom I thought it likely I might have procured you a well-conditioned specimen of honey-buz-

zard, as I happened to know that he had several times shot that bird in Lord Lonsdale's grounds; but, 'alas, poor Yorick!' I found that, about two years ago, he had gone the way of all flesh, and that his collection was entirely dispersed. His place was not occupied by any one in the same line; so my mission, *quoad F.* [*Pernis*] *apivorus*, failed.

"I hear of nothing interesting here at present. The fall of the leaf enables one to watch the habits of the smaller forest-birds, such as tit-mice, &c. Both the cole and long-tailed tit-mice are in great abundance, and very active. I also see the golden-crested wren, the creeper, and, more rarely, the nut-hatch. There is also, not far from this, a large flock of cross-bills, now considerably reduced by amateurs and country sportsmen. At first there appeared to be about sixty of them, now between thirty and forty. The char-fishing has commenced, but with little success as yet.

"In regard to the entomological duplicates which you specify, the only one I can promise for certain is *Artaxerxes*. I have one spare specimen of *Blandina;* but, if I part with it, I think it is bespoke. A single specimen was taken for the first time near Edinburgh the summer before last. I have no duplicates at present of the others you mention, but shall keep them for you if they occur."

TO SIR W. JARDINE, BART.

"WOODVILLE, 28*th April* 1829.

"DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—I had yesterday afternoon the pleasure to receive your letter of the 24th, accompanied by a small box of insects, for both of which I am much obliged. Since I saw you I have twice been laid up with a bad sore throat and cold, and have not ventured from home except on one occasion, when I joined the Scottish Academicians at their late feed in Waterloo Place. I was not much the better of that excursion, though I had the satisfaction to meet Mr Selby and others, whom I don't incline to miss.

"In regard to *Lophophorus Nigelli*, I have never even seen it since it was stuffed, having scarcely been in the Museum this year. Indeed, it is certainly not there; but I shall find it out the very first day that I have it in my power to leave home, and shall immediately make up some notes upon it, which you will be so good as alter and amend, or put into any form you think proper. I had the subject in view some months ago, and went into town to see what could be picked up concerning the genus in general, in one of the Dictionaries of Natural History; but all I got for my pains was the following useful information: '*Lophophore*—Voyez Monaul;' and

then, '*Monaul*—Voyez Lophophore,' which is not particularly explicit.

"If you wish to draw one or two of the females of the new grouse you saw with me, arrange your plans so as to pass some days here in the course of the summer, and whatever accommodation this humble roof affords, will be at your service. I suppose I ought to write to Mr Sabine in the first place, to ask his leave before altering their destination. I have a good deal on hand of other kind of matters, and I don't think I will have time or patience to draw the females of such as greatly resemble their males.

"I wish you would furnish me with the names of any of the recent works on natural history, systematic or otherwise, which you think would aid me in the formation of the encyclopædia articles which I have undertaken to contribute to the new edition of the 'Britannica.' If you have any notes of species which you would like to see entered in that work, I shall be glad to receive them, and acknowledge publicly the source from which they are derived. The management and control of the whole zoological department have been offered to me, and upon very liberal terms; and although there are many departments which I am quite incompetent to work at, yet I have nearly agreed to engage for the whole, with the view of receiving assistance from others, whom I shall remu-

nerate according to the terms which I myself receive. I have not matured my plans, but I think it likely that I shall myself attempt 'Mammalia,' 'Ornithology,' 'Reptilia,' 'Arachnides,' and 'Entomology,' leaving 'Ichthyology,' 'Mollusca,' 'Vermes,' 'Crustacea,' and 'Zoophytes' for further consideration. Under these ten great heads may, I think, be presented a compendious view of the animal kingdom, commonly so called. I shall greatly value any assistance or advice you may be pleased to give me in these matters."

The labour involved in this enterprise was immense; but it was spread over many years, and the subject was to his heart's content. Taking the articles in their final form, and as they have appeared in the edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' now in progress,* the following is their extent as nearly as we can estimate:—

Angling, ...	19 pages.
Animal Kingdom, . . .	25 „
Animalcula, ...	20 „
Bee, ...	3 „
Entomology, ...	265 „
Fisheries, ...	61 „
Helminthology, . . .	17 „

* Of course including Ichthyology, and the other articles, which he did not live to revise for the new edition.

Ichthyology, ...	90 pages.
Mammalia, ...	121 „
Ornithology, ...	95 „
Reptiles and Serpents, . .	73 „

Nine hundred pages of such close quarto letterpress are nearly equal to nine ordinary octavo volumes; and when it is remembered what myriads of facts these contributions contain, many of them only ascertainable by consulting a variety of conflicting authorities, the reader will have some conception of the varied knowledge and diligent research of which these pages are the durable record. But seldom have the results of research been brought out in a style so agreeable. Before Mr Wilson's time it had been usual to reduce encyclopædia articles to a certain respectable uniformity of style, and, like the mixed multitude of steeds and donkeys in an old-fashioned diligence, the contributors were not only expected to pull together, but were required to maintain the self-same pace. Mr Wilson asserted his individuality. Although writing for a dictionary, he was not haunted by the fear of prigs and pedants, but allowed his bright and genial nature to come freely forth, and in the pleasure with which his articles were read, he found the justification of so wise a frankness. The severely scientific might be jealous of so much poetry, and more jealous still of so much plain English; but he knew what he was doing,

and as he held along his path, for the sake of the like-minded he still scattered pearls, well wotting that in the same track the rasorial searchers after grubs and grains would also find their food convenient.

His bold experiment succeeded. Encyclopædias are no longer the monopoly of literary dustmen and museum-cinder-sifters, but are repositories in which true and able men may be glad to treasure up their thoughts as well as to expound their great discoveries. And much as Dr Dryasdust mourns over it, a new volume is welcomed like a new quarterly, and Macaulay is as eloquent, and Doran as entertaining, and Goldwin Smith as masterly as if he had no dull or hum-drum neighbours. All honour to James Wilson for having the courage to wear his own attire and speak his own idiom, in what till then had been the Quaker-town of English literature.

To go over these nine hundred pages we have found anything but a drudgery—the surest sign that to the author there was no sense of drudgery in compiling them. Not only did he love the subject, but in the business of composition he had enviable facility and great enjoyment. Of course, there was a large amount of toil involved in bringing his materials together, but as soon as he had mastered the topic and collected his authorities, the pen ran fast and the thought flowed free. So eminently social was his turn, that he preferred to study in the

midst of his family. Their talking did not interrupt him; and as Mrs Wilson liked to listen to reading whilst going on with her work, it was not unusual for one of the party to be reading aloud one book whilst he himself was busy writing another. In this way it is remembered that he wrote the whole of his work on Angling, whilst, owing to the accession of a lively visitor, a brisk current of conversation was circulating around him day by day, into which, without any absolute pause in his employment, he dipped occasionally—thus encouraging that cheerfulness in others, which to his own kind spirit was the most quickening music.

Simultaneously with his encyclopædia articles, Mr Wilson was engaged in a lighter but kindred task. Amongst the various undertakings to which Constable's "Miscellany" gave rise, and which brought a large supply of sound information within the reach of every reader, no one was more judiciously planned or more conscientiously carried out than "The Edinburgh Cabinet Library." Its object was to give a geographical and historical panorama of the world, taking its chief races and regions one by one. By a wise distribution of labour, superior treatment was secured for every subject; and the zoology of Africa, India, China, and North America, was contributed by Mr Wilson.

This chapter on the early days at "Canaan" may be

fitly concluded by an extract from a letter to a near and much-loved relative:—

"WOODVILLE, 26*th May* 1831.

"You will be delighted to hear that Isabella has been in prodigious good case for some time back. We have commenced our cuddy-ass excursions, and intend to continue them steadily. The beast is much improved in its paces, and, with a great deal of the grace and dignity of the higher quadrupeds, exhibits nothing of that perverse obstinacy to which so many asses, both human and brute, are entitled to lay claim, and of which the claims are admitted by a considerate and cuddy-consoling, though sometimes inconsistent world.

"In regard to ornithology, you will be glad to hear that our corner green-lintie's (linnet's) nest was more fortunate in escaping the eyes and fingers of bakers' and butchers' boys than we could have looked for, considering its exposed situation. I think when you left us they had scarcely ceased to be, in the words of the late Dr Andrew Thomson, 'a small family of featherless children;' but the Woodville air agreed so well with them that their heads and tails hung over the sides of the nest, as if they had been intended for a larger domicile. We looked daily for their taking flight of their own accord, when one morning two of the young Adies called, and expressed a

great wish for a pair of greenies. So I went to the nest, and was in the act of stretching out my hand to help myself, when out sprung two of the strongest and uppermost, and spouted across the avenue. The youngest of the family, however, who had all along been much tyrannised over by his brothers and sisters, remained in the forsaken dwelling, swelled out his wings, and stretched his hind legs in such a manner as to say very clearly that their absence was good company. But the hands of the Philistines were soon upon him, and he was hauled, *nolens volens*, from his mossy bed, and handed over to fair *Haidee*. As, however, a pair were required, I made an excursion to the evergreen where yours were born and bred last year, and there I succeeded in securing another, although his elder brother also took it into his head to spout out of his nest when he saw me coming. Indeed, the whole of our troops are prepared for revolt, and won't even eat their dinners unless they get 'the *bill*, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill.' In the same bush with the last-named nest there is also a delightful group of young blackbirds; and throughout the garden various other nests are in different states and stages. The one in the porch is still in safety; but the mother seems to suffer greatly from heat, and sits with her *neb* generally open. I suppose she wishes it to pass for a reform-bill. We have got Mr Adie's sea-maw, which is already quite at

home. All our other pets are well, both the feathered, and the bombazined and ginghamed. I dined one day, a while ago, with Dr Greville; but the family were still at Lasswade. We had Dr Scott of Corstorphine. I preached and presided, but Dr S. said grace: nobody returned thanks. Old —— is still alive, but not kicking. He rang his bell t'other morning, but had, very sensibly, first bolted the door in the inside, which only made his daughter *wring* her hands on the outside. At last, I believe, Dr —— crept in through the key whole, and found all as usual."

CHAPTER V.

The Moors and the Mountains.

"How lonesome! how wild! yet the wildness is rife
With the stir of enjoyment, the spirit of life.
The glad fish leaps up in the heart of the lake,
Whose depths at the sullen plunge sullenly quake.
Elate on the fern-branch the grasshopper sings,
And away in the midst of his roundelay springs; . . .
While high up the mountains, in silence remote,
The cuckoo unseen is repeating his note,
And mellowing echo, on watch in the skies,
Like a voice from some loftier climate replies."

—John Wilson.

"Entered Fox How and the birch copse at 9.25, and here ends journal. We found all our dear children well, and Fox How in such beauty, that no scene in Italy appeared in my eyes comparable to it."—Dr Arnold.

THOSE who are called practical people enjoy many advantages over such of their fellows as are afflicted with keen sensibilities, and not the least advantage is the ease with which they set out on their travels. They are troubled with no qualms at parting; in long letters homeward they waste none of the hours sacred to slumber; and having slipped the collar before starting, they drag no load of ever-lengthening chain. On Friday night a practical man announces that he has made his arrangements for a six-weeks furlough; orders breakfast at a quarter to eight next morning, packs his portmanteau, replenishes his flask of *eau de vie*, and after a general "Good-bye," jumps into the Hansom bound for London Bridge or Euston Square. Perhaps a tear stood in some one's eye as he shouted "All right;" but then wives and sisters have a way of shedding tears, and they could never dream of sharing the trip; for, to say nothing of the expense, it is their business to be "keepers at home." So making up his mind that they will all, as in duty bound, keep well and happy until his return, he hies forth on his own

holiday, a light-armed traveller, with little luggage and no care, as buoyant as a lark, as merry as a sailor.

But to this self-contained compactness Mr Wilson was a stranger. The best of his life was that which he lived in others, and to him it was hardly a holiday unless his home went with him. Besides, bravely as she bore up, he could not forget that his wife was a frequent invalid; and whenever he went forth on any journey he carried with him the anxious forebodings which a busy imagination is sure to suggest to a fond affection. It was, therefore, very seldom that he could be persuaded to join those more distant expeditions which separated him from the domestic circle. However fascinating to the angler and the enthusiastic lover of nature might be the prospect of new landscapes and noble rivers, it could not tempt the husband and the father.

Nevertheless, in three successive summers he was induced to accompany Professor Graham and his botanising companions in their excursions to the mountains of Forfarshire and Sutherland. In the wilder regions the accommodation was sometimes of the most primitive description, and a party of twenty pedestrians would sleep in a hay-loft, or on the floor of the one spare room in a little public-house, or even in a mountain shielling without glass to the windows. On more than one occasion they were accompanied by a naval officer whose feats of

snoring Mr Wilson used merrily to describe as something prodigious. The first night he kept the whole party awake listening to his astounding performances. The second night he was voted into a separate room, along with a deaf old gardener who was proof against ordinary noises. In the morning his room-mate was asked how he had slept. "I never slept a wink. He gart the very bed dirl under him."* At last it became needful to extort a solemn pledge that, by way of giving all his neighbours a chance, the gallant captain would not lay his head on the pillow till quarter an hour after his comrades—a pledge which he kept with gay good humour, sitting up, stop-watch in hand, till the company had a fair start of fifteen minutes; but woe betide the luckless wretch who could not gain the arms of Morpheus before Triton sounded his trumpet.

In these excursions he had many delightful associates, and there he commenced a life-long acquaintance with Professor Balfour, with the late Martin Barry, one of the manliest of Quakers and most endearing of men,† and with the highly-gifted Edward Forbes. Speaking of the

* That is, the diapason made the very bed-stead tingle.

† Dr Martin Barry published in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* (new series, vol. xviii. p. 106) an ascent of Mont Blanc which he accomplished Sept. 18, 1834, when such an exploit was not the occurrence of every season. He was the twentieth individual and the twelfth Englishman who succeeded in reaching the summit.

Sutherland tour of 1833, our friend Mr James Macaulay tells us:—"The two who had greatest similarity and sympathy of pursuits were Mr Wilson and Dr Greville, both keen anglers and entomologists. There were two or three others who combined sport with zoology. In the evenings all used to meet at an appointed rendezvous, and, at the pleasant gathering round the table, James Wilson was the life of the party. He was a great favourite with the young students, to whom he was always ready to give information and advice in those branches of natural history, with which the chief, Professor Graham, a man of like geniality and disposition, was less familiar. There never was a man in whom humour and good sense, cheerfulness and gravity, were blended in happier proportions."

The first of the following letters to Mrs Wilson is from Clova, Forfarshire, Aug. 5, 1831.

"I know, my dear love, that you will be anxious to receive a line or two from your husband, the more especially as that husband was not quite in his usual condition when he departed most unwillingly from his own beloved roof. I much fear, from what I hear of the state of roads and letter-carriers in this part of the world, that these lines will be longer than I desire of meeting your eyes; and this consideration is the source of some uneasi-

ness to myself at present, when I sinfully incline to view everything in its most comfortless light. However, I trust you are bearing in mind what I said on my departure, and are not so uneasy as you would otherwise have been. Did my opportunities correspond with my heart s desire, no hour would pass without a communication; for I can safely say that scarcely a waking moment has been spent otherwise than in thinking of those I have left behind.

"We breakfasted at Cupar on beef-steaks and salmon, and reached Forfar about three o'clock. There we hired a cart for our knapsacks, and also bought thirty or forty threepenny loaves and a round of cold beef, and started on foot for this little hamlet, which is situated in a wild, secluded valley, through the centre of which flows the South Esk. At Forfar we had previously regaled ourselves on cheese and bread, and ale; and, in the course of our pedestrian progress, in the evening we got bannocks and milk in a cottage by the road-side. It was past ten before we got to Clova, where we regaled ourselves on tea and bread, and went to bed thereafter. The bed for the greater part of the party consisted of a layer of hay upon the floor, with a blanket or two over the top of it. I was voted into one of the two beds, properly so called, out of respect, I suppose, to my years and reverend character; and although I resisted this indulgence for some time, I

was forced to submit to the kindness of my fellow-travellers. My chief pleasure in so doing arises from knowing that *you* would feel pleasure from knowing that I was comfortable, or rather from being told that I had been so. I was much refreshed by a sound sleep, and awoke about a quarter past six with the unaccustomed feeling that I had got enough. My neighbours were by this time stirring in the adjoining room; so I got up, and we breakfasted a little after seven. Most of the party started for the hills to collect their plants, and I took my rod and fished up the river about three miles and back again, and killed five dozen of trouts. Two others who also tried angling killed three dozen between them; so we had a pleasant addition to our dinner. I returned to the house in good time; but it was towards seven before the botanists descended from the mountains. They got many rare and curious plants, the arrangement and pressure of which presented a busy candle-light scene for some hours in the evening.

"God bless my darling children. I hope and pray that they are well. I shall be at the Castletown of Braemar early on Wednesday; and I hope my Monday letter may reach me then. I think I begin to derive benefit from the fresh air and exercise; but my disease still hangs about me in regard to miserable apprehensions, which the goodness of God will, I trust, ere long shew to be unfounded.

I feel the wickedness of such feelings, surrounded as I am by so many of the glories of Omnipotent Wisdom, and reading, as I do daily, that "He will never leave nor forsake us;" but still I cannot help thinking every moment that I left you not quite well, and that you may be worse. We are preparing for a very early bed, and as soon as the 'things' are taken away, the hay will be spread upon the floor. Kiss my children for me, my dearest; and think night and day with affection of your unaltered and unalterable friend and husband, now and ever,

"JAMES WILSON."

On his way to the Clova rendezvous next year (1832), he paid a visit to a noted insect-collector, Mr Mylne, of Johnshaven.

"BRECHIN, 1*st August* 1832.

"After breakfast, I despatched my card to Mr Mylne, requesting to know if I might wait on him that morning. I received a written reply, begging me to come when convenient; so down I goes to the house. Johnshaven is a sort of small Stonehaven. It lies along the shore, and has a few decent-looking houses, built of dark gray stone, intermixed with small shops and the huts of the fishermen. In one of the better houses I found Mr Mylne —an old man, rather frail, with gray hair, a long pale face, lank wrists, and red eyes,—very like what I shall be

myself when approaching my eightieth year. He received me very kindly, introduced me to his sister, Mrs Gregory, an old woman of the stocking-knitting kind, with a pair of spectacles; and a niece, whose name was Catherine. We commenced our entomological studies instanter, the niece handing out drawer after drawer from the side cabinets, and placing them on the table in front. The collection is very fine, and consists of all the orders. My impression was that he was rich chiefly in *Lepidoptera;* but the *Coleoptera* are also very numerous and valuable. The specimens are almost all very perfect; but they are, in a good many instances, obscured by a whitish mould, from not having been often enough aired. Mrs Gregory wanted to wash them with soap and water; but the old gentleman would not 'hear of it.' We took from about half-past ten till three merely in giving a cursory glance. There are, I think, about one hundred and sixty drawers. They requested me to stay dinner, which I did. By five I was on my legs again, and off on foot to Brechin. At the inn I had a tender parting with the fat landlady. During my absence she had been reading, or trying to read, Keble's 'Christian Year,' and had discovered M——'s sweet lock of hair. I told her its history in such a way as to bring tears to the good woman's eyes; and, that she might continue speaking about the 'darlin' wee crater,' as she called our lassie, she accompanied me through the village, and up

the brow of the hill, as far as the public road. We there shook hands, and parted. I now retraced my steps a few miles on the Montrose road, and then, by means of that fine local instinct for which I am remarkable, I crossed the country to the right hand, by Langley Park, the manse of Dun, &c., and arrived here about ten o'clock last night, after a pleasant tramp of about sixteen miles. I now intend treating myself to a gig to Cortachy, after which I shall have only eight miles to walk. In a few hours, therefore, I hope to be in the arms of Graham and Greville. I was in the King's *Arms* all last night. Now, my dearest, I hope and pray that this will find you well. I assure you that I am so, and quite comfortable, mind and body. God bless you.—Ever, &c.

"*P.S.*—Remember to take in the mouse."

"CLOVA, *Friday evening.*

"I wrote you a few lines from Brechin, after which I embarked on board my gig, from which I dismounted at Cortachy. I had not walked fifty yards before I overtook the son of our Clova landlord in a cart. I remembered his phiz from last year, and after we had interchanged greetings by means of broad grins, I favoured him with my rod and fishing basket, which greatly lightened my own load. I had then a cool pleasant walk to Clova, where I found the party at dinner and tea conjoined. I

was welcomed very heartily,—Graham, Greville, and the young American, Green, being the only individuals I had previously seen of the party. The rest are students, sixteen or seventeen in all, ourself included.

"The day after I arrived we went up to the head of this valley, as far as Loch Esk, where several botanised, and a few fished. The day was too calm for the latter exercise, and we had no great sport; but I had the satisfaction of being the victor by about twice the number of the others. We had milk and water, with do. and whisky, at a little forlorn and romantic shooting-hut of Sir John Ogilvy's, about a thousand miles up in the air. We had also Sandwich Islands in our pockets. I have already been fortunate in getting some good insects; among others, four fine specimens of *Carabus glabratus*, a large beetle which you will find among my *carabi* with broken elytra.

"To-day I fished in Loch Brandy, one of my haunts of last year. We had no great sport. I called two dozen and two, Greville nineteen, T. W—— thirteen. I can scarcely believe that I have been here only two days—such a bustle and botanising. But oh! the snoring and snorting that take place at night. Drs Graham, Greville, Wight, Green, and myself, sleep *quietly* in one room, part of us in two beds, and the rest upon the floor. In the other room the scene is extraordinary, for there the floor

is covered from end to end with students in different states of graduation. This season we have plenty of prog. We breakfast about seven. Various parties start in various directions, each furnished with a pocket-companion to sustain life. Some return at five, some at seven, and some not till nine. The butcher-meat is mostly cold, *except* the potatoes and fish, so that a few minutes are enough to prepare the meal of each squadron as it arrives. They have got some fine plants, greatly to my inconvenience as a scribe, for the long table is covered with their collections, and there is little or no elbow-room.

"Remember me to the darlings, and tell J—— about *C. glabratus* on the tops of the high hills. There are millions of moths upon the moors, and beetles under every stone. I will shew him my collection whenever I get home, and give him some to himself."

"Manse of Blair-Athol,
12*th August* 1832.

"We arrived here last night, after a stout walk of upwards of thirty miles across the mountains from Braemar to the head of Glen Tilt, and so down the valley to this snug dwelling, where we have been received with great kindness, and enjoy every comfort—except, 'Home, sweet home!' the delights of which,

though sung in the hackneyed strains of dirty boys and blackguard ballad-mongers, are at this moment to me the most inspiring and the most refreshing subjects of reflection. Many a time have I looked at the lassie's lock of golden hair; many a time, on the barren summits of the everlasting hills, have I hung over it and prayed that the sweet head from which it was severed might be protected from evil. When the sun rose and scattered the mountain vapours, which in our Alpine habitations sometimes lay low beneath our feet, I thought how the sweet summits of Blackford would be also brightened by his beams; and when the golden splendour of the west, with its magnificent array of purple mountains, the 'dark Loch-na-gar' and the giant peaks of the Cairngorm range, betokened the decline of day, I thought of the reflected light of our own quiet Pentlands, and how mamma might be sitting at her own sweet window, thinking, perhaps, of her husband who never ceases to think of and to pray for her. Although I should have been truly grateful to have found on my arrival here that my dearest had been keeping well, I had yet so far made up my mind to the probability of hearing the reverse; and although I was disappointed after all, I fervently hope by this time that the enemy is gone."

"STEWARTFIELD, 16*th August* 1832.

"When I was taking my saunter before breakfast among the dew-besprinkled larches of this sweet solitude, the *flunkey* came down upon me from the house with your most welcome epistle. It refreshes my heart's core to hear such good accounts of your health, and it is my morning, and evening, and mid-day prayer that the same delightful state should continue. I have to thank you for such long and particular accounts, and I will not at present quarrel with your anxieties on my account; although I was in hopes, from what I had said as to the frequent intervals which must elapse between my letters, you would have made up your mind to what was unavoidable. Even during what has certainly been a period of enjoyment, I have often wished that I had wings that I might flee away to my much-loved home, and be at rest in the society of those who are now dearer to me than all the world besides. But I knew that you dwelt under the shadow of those Almighty wings which encompass the world, and I felt satisfied that no plague would come nigh your dwelling. I am, indeed, most thankful that you now enjoy your sweet home. I had previously rejoiced in your last letter addressed to Blair-Athol, and yesterday morning Dr Greville and myself, with elastic heels and light hearts, bade adieu to our kind friends at the manse, and walked down the country through the

Pass of Killiecrankie to Stewartfield,—a walk for picturesque beauty unsurpassed by almost anything I have ever seen. I wish I could picture the gray crags, the weeping birches, the open glades, the windings of the crystal river, and over all the summits of the granite mountains, with their dark ravines and blooming heather, and I would send you such a panorama as eye never saw. Hundreds of times, every few miles, did I wish you by my side; and I sometimes felt inclined to shut my eyes upon the most beautiful scenes, from a feeling of its being selfish to behold the face of nature under so fair an aspect when my beloved wife was, perhaps, even then shut up in the dim seclusion of a sick-chamber.

"Unluckily, we have never had a regular rainy day for journalising; and as my time here is so short, I feel assured you will prefer my looking about me, that I may have it in my power to tell you what is to be seen, rather than that I should sit down to write you about what I have yet scarcely seen, viz., the beauties of Stewartfield. It is really a delightful and romantic spot—a sort of little Ellcray on the hill-top, with higher hills behind, and well screened with wood.

"The minister's family at Blair were extremely kind. When I mentioned our intention of staying here for a day, the conversation branched towards the inhabitants of Stewartfield; and when Mrs Stewart said, 'Can you tell

me, Mr Wilson, what has become of a Miss Isabella Keith that I remember *about* Edinburgh?' I could only answer, *drily*, as they say in the play, that if she meant my wife, she was still a respectable sort of a woman, and, at the present time, in better health than usual. I was sorry afterwards that I had not humoured the joke by saying that you had got into a sad scrape some years ago by marrying a ne'er-do-weel of the name of Wilson, and that neither of them had ever been heard of since. As it was, however, the question and answer led to some amusement among us.

"I have gone thus far, my dearest, without alluding to that most affecting and afflicting intelligence conveyed in your letter—the death of that beneficent Christian and kind-hearted man, George White. Like many other mysterious dispensations, it is difficult to realise; but, alas! it is true. The happy believer is at rest for ever. As to his family, humanly speaking, the loss is irreparable; but He who pours His blessed balm into the widow's soul, till her heart does sing for joy, will be their stay in this their hour of desolation; and we know that the children of a righteous man are not seen 'begging bread.'"

The next letter, in a clear and careful hand, is to his little daughter:—

"DOLLAR, *Monday night, 20th August* 1832.

"MY DEAR, SWEET LASSIE,—I wish to tell you a secret, which I hope will make you very glad—I expect to be home on Wednesday evening to my own Woodville. Don't tell this to Mamma, Henny, or Johnny, but just make them guess. You must all sit up to supper that night, if mamma is well; and we will all be so happy. I have been a long time away from home, and will be real glad to get back. I hope you have both been good children, and I expect to find you improved in your reading, writing, and spelling. I have got a great many beetles and a good many butterflies. Perhaps you have seen the beetles, as they went home with Uncle Greville, who promised to call very soon at Woodville, to tell mamma about papa. I have also several large living caterpillars, but some of them have died. I forgot to tell mamma to put the grass with the glow-worms' eggs upon it into the park, that the young ones might thrive better when they were hatched. I was much obliged to you for your little letter. If I am away next year, you will be able to write to me a long, long letter yourself, and tell me all that is going on. You are now growing an old bit creature, and will soon be very useful to papa and mamma; and when Johnny goes to school, you will rise early in the morning, and see that his little breakfast is laid out neat and comfortably; and you will be very kind to one another, for God loves chil-

dren who dwell together in unity. I have often prayed for you all when I was far away; and when I saw the beautiful moon shining upon the still waters—when I was all alone among the green hills—I used to think that perhaps, at that very moment, you were praying to God to keep your papa in safety; and I blessed God for giving me good children, and for giving them a mamma who taught them to love their God and their Saviour. I am very thankful to hear that your dear mamma has now been so well for a pretty long time; and I hope we will soon be all working in the garden merrily together. Have you any gooseberries left? I have scarcely eaten one this year, for they do not grow upon the hills, where I have mostly been. Give my love to mamma; and tell her that, although I intend to be home on Wednesday, she must not be at all uneasy if I don't come; because I am not quite sure if there will be a boat from Alloa on that day. Now, my sweet pet, I will not write any more. God bless you. Remember me to everybody at Woodville; and believe me, now and ever, your affectionate papa,

"JAMES WILSON."

Of an expedition to Sutherland, in 1833, we shall content ourselves with two brief memorials:—

"INCHNADAMFF, ASSYNT, *6th August* 1833.

"I think I told you in my last, that we crossed the

country from the Bay of Cromarty to the Dornoch Firth the day after the Duke [of Sutherland] was buried at Dornoch. An old lady told us, 'He was just decin' when they tuik him awa' frae England; but it was nat'rel: it wad gie him pleeshur to be puried in the Hielands.' We found the sky as bright and the waters of the frith as sparkling as if no duke had died. When we were entering a narrow defile, with gray crags on one side, a brawling brook below, and on the opposite side a fine old fir wood, we saw, moving over the tops of the rocks, some black creatures or substances, which we took at first to be crows. A few moments dispelled the illusion, and, with its cross-bones and skulls, its sand-glasses and waving plumes, came rattling down the road the 'narrow house' which had recently conveyed the mortal remains of him to whom the entire county had belonged. It seemed full of packing boxes, &c., and the coachman appeared to be a little whiskified.

"As the whole population, to the amount of nine or ten thousand, had been out to see the sight, we found that the eatables in some places had suffered severely from the inroads of these barbarian clans. When we arrived at Bonar Bridge, we found Greville and Barry awaiting us. They had arrived at Tain the day before; and, expecting us to join them there, they ordered dinner for twenty people, which dinner was to take place in the ball-room.

However, as our steam-boat was far too late to admit of working our way on Wednesday night to Tain, the pair were disappointed of our company; and, after waiting till nine o'clock, they—the doctor and the Quaker—sat down to dinner by themselves. How they would pick and choose out of such an enormous supply! I believe they had to compound next day for the landlord's extensive preparations."

"LAIRG, ON LOCH SHIN, 18*th August* 1833.

. . . . "After passing Loch Eribol (why don't you look at the map?), we came upon the lower end of Loch Hope, where there is a river of the same name, which you cross by a chain boat. The fare is a half-penny. There were at this time three of us, Dr Greville, Captain Graham, and myself—the rest having gone up towards their night's quarters by another route to the head of the loch. I gave the woman who ferried us sixpence, which made her press us to enter the ferry-house and take a drink of milk. This we did, paying for the same. Half an hour before, we met a doctor, galloping to see a dead man. We stopped him, partly that the man might have some chance of recovering, and partly to inquire about the fishing. He declared it was excellent in the river Hope, of which the course is extremely short, being only about a mile before it joins the saline water of Loch Eribol. This being con-

firmed by the ferry-woman, we remained for some hours, and had excellent sport. We then proceeded about nine miles into the interior, by the side of the lake as long as it lasted, and up a lonely valley for two miles more, when it was done.

"A small hut, called Cashel Dhu, was to be our place of rendezvous, and there we joined the rest of the party to a candle-light dinner, consisting of excellent mutton from Mrs Scobie's, portable soup, trouts, and potatoes. In the course of the evening, Mr John Scobie, who had been from home during our visit, burst in upon us, like a kilted Mercury in full Highland costume. He is a lively, kind-hearted, strong-built Highlander, and expressed great regret at what he called our speedy departure. He was for returning home again that night, which was, in fact, equivalent to sleeping in the moor; but we insisted that he should share our hay. We had here only one small room for the whole party, and so, learning from Barry that in the earlier part of the day had botanised up the valley, and passed a shepherd's hut, where he was told he might stay all night, we thought it advisable to divide a little, as there was literally not room for us all upon the floor. Therefore Barry and myself, with Captain Graham and the kilted Scobie, though we had all had a hard day's work, set off in the dark towards twelve o'clock, in search of a roosting place. After a few miles we came to the shep-

herd's hut, at which we knocked, and knocked, and knocked again; but the only answer we met for long was the violent barking of a band of collies in the interior. At last a feeble and querulous grumbling was heard, as if from under a heap of clothes. We could make nothing of it for a considerable time, and so continued our knocking at door and windows. We finally made out that the muffled murmurings were intended to warn us off—that everybody *should* be in bed by that time of night—and that we must make the best of our way back to Cashel Dhu. In vain we entreated, and expostulated, and explained; in vain did Mr John Scobie menace them with ducal wrath, alternately in Gaelic and 'the English tongue;' still more in vain did the gentler Barry 'thee' and 'thou' through the key-hole or the broken *lozen*. 'Thou didst willingly promise me a night's lodging when I passed thy dwelling in the day-time. Surely thou wouldst not refuse us the cover of thy roof, and the use of thy hay. Thou oughtest not to have promised, if thou intendedst not to fulfil. Thou hast deceived us, and now we know not what to do.' I was certain from the first, from the tone of her voice, that she would not yield, and advised the party to be off, though I could not exactly advise them in what direction to turn their steps. We were about to go back to Cashel Dhu, when Mr Scobie proposed we should venture a few miles more up the valley, as he was 'pretty sure' there was a hut

somewhere on the other side of the river. Though angry at the caprice and selfishness of the woman who had turned us away (the man never spoke, and was supposed not to be at home, though I doubt not he was lying ensconced on the other side of his cruel rib), we were in good humour with ourselves, and there was at least the chance of novelty in the adventure. It was now nearly one in the morning, fair, but dark. We passed the ruins of an old Pictish tower, seen dimly shadowed on the sky. The mountains were closing darkly around us as we approached the head of the vale, and the river, 'hurried precipitous from steep to steep,' foamed along the side of our path, or gushed in long, deep, gloomy pools, not easily distinguished from the sombre bank on which we travelled. But the brave Highlander led the way with a light elastic step, and led us as securely as if our road had been the aisle of a church. At last he said, 'We must cross here,' and immediately stepped into the brawling stream. This would have been no joke nearer home, and I once or twice thought I felt Isabella pulling my coat-tails; but as for Scobie, he had no tails to pull, so in he plunged deeper and deeper still. From constant fishing, Captain Graham and myself were very sure of foot upon the slippery stones, and firm of limb to withstand the downward sweeping of the torrent. But, alas! for Barry and his breadth of brim. 'Friend, art thou assured of the way? This now seemeth to me rather a perilous

passage. Thinkest thou we had not best return?' But Scobie's bare knees were now beginning to emerge from the flood, and in a few seconds more three of us stood upon the further bank, while Barry, making a few desperate plunges, also gained a firmer footing in more shallow water, and was soon landed in safety. Well, it was now two in the morning, and we were still doubtful where to turn. But Scobie, after snuffing about for a few minutes like a pointer, seemed to ascertain some landmarks, and starting across the heath, he led us in another quarter of an hour to a hut about the size of a pea-stack. All was solemn and silent for a time, till we groped out the door. He gave a tap, and was answered in Gaelic. He appeared to give a short statement of our case and condition, and, from a few interjectional 'Oich, oich's!' from within, I judged that the heart of woman was at last subdued. Suffice to say that we were admitted. We found a lone woman, a girly of about ten, and a litter of younger children. We had no candle, but the woman soon blew up the embers of a peat fire, which occupied the centre of the room, and then ever and anon lighting small lath-like pieces of some resinous wood, she threw a bright glare over the strange, incongruous group by which she was surrounded. There was the martial Highlander, with his rosy limbs fresh from the crystal stream, standing erect with his plumed bonnet on his head, and one of the lighted sticks between his

fingers. There was also the Quaker, with his translucent eye, his figure leaning forward on his staff, with an appearance of fatigue combined with a deep interest in the scene, his moist garments clinging closely to his weary and well-watered limbs. Captain Graham had in the meantime sat down on the floor, on the lid of an old herring-barrel, his face beaming with smiles, and reflecting every ray of light from its broad and happy surface. I was standing myself in the background, scratching the nose of a collie, and watching the wreaths of smoke as they made their way through two large holes in the roof, amid rafters black as ebony, and shining as if varnished. We got in hay from the barn, and stretched ourselves around the fire, till daylight dawned down the chimney. I must stop, for my candle is going out."

The short excursions of those three summers were followed, in 1834, by an elaborate exploration of the county of Sutherland. In this expedition the botanist and draughtsman was Dr Greville; and the different branches of zoology were looked after by Sir William Jardine, Mr Selby, Mr John Jardine, and Mr Wilson. A conveyance was provided suitable to such a "land of mountain and flood,"—a boat upon wheels, which could be used as a carriage on *terra firma*, and which, when occasion required, could take to the water. When the time for

setting out drew near, Mr Wilson's spirits sank at the prospect of so long an absence; but, rather than disorganise the party, he placed his own feelings in abeyance; and not only did he contrive to enjoy the tour himself, but he contributed greatly to the enjoyment of his brother *savans*. The survey of the county was rich in scientific results, and threw much light on the birds, fishes, insects, and plants of a region till then very imperfectly explored.*

"INVERNESS, *Wednesday morning,*
28*th May* 1834.

"I know that you will rejoice to hear that, after a delightful drive by Dunkeld and Killiecrankie, we arrived here safe and sound last night at half-past ten. We were by that time somewhat tired, and not a little dirty; for the day being bright and dry, was likewise dusty; and as we had left Perth at five in the morning (when and where I met your nephew, Colonel Murray) we were well worn out by the afternoon. I found the party waiting my arrival at Perth, and all in great glee and good humour except myself, and I was not *vale bad*, though there was still a bit of lead about my heart, part of which (I think

* Its entomological results were published by Mr Wilson in two papers, one in the *Entomological Magazine*, vol. iv., the other in the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*, vol. xix. In the twentieth vol. of the last named periodical, there are papers on the Quadrupeds and Birds of Sutherlandshire, by Mr Selby, and in the eighteenth vol. a dissertation on its *Salmonidæ*, by Sir W. Jardine.

I was wounded in the Peninsula) will probably remain till the end of my pilgrimage. After some supper, we went to bed, I hope thankful for our mercies, which are great, and, though not unacknowledged, yet seldom felt as they ever ought to be.

"Our yesterday's ride passes description; so I will let it pass, merely remarking what you may have elsewhere noticed, but which I never saw more magnificently exemplified than amid the wooded theatre of Killiecrankie, that the fresh and verdurous foliage of the bursting spring is preferable in such a scene to the matured and almost arid *leafery* of summer. Here and there a group of shy and reluctant-looking ash-trees shewed us that something was yet to come; but the oaks, birches, and sycamores were all beautiful exceedingly. We supped on our arrival at Inverness, after *ploutering* up stairs, and sweeping the dust out of our eyes, and blowing it out of our noses with a pair of bellows. We find they do for that purpose far better than pocket-handkerchiefs, and one pair is enough for the whole party.

"We have been very busy all morning getting our horses and tackle fitted to each other. We have got a stout pair of beasts for about thirty pounds; and as we shall only lose a few pounds in selling them afterwards, we expect this plan will be cheaper than hiring—especially as we shall feed them in Sutherland chiefly at

the Duchess-Countess's expense. We are just about to start for Invergordon, with our own horses and a stage-coach attached to them. At Invergordon we shall substitute our boat-carriage for the said stage, and proceed to-morrow to Bonar Bridge. I do not expect to get there till after the post has passed; and as he does not pass every day, don't be alarmed. Remember, my comfort depends a great deal upon your not being nervous on my account. You may rely upon my writing often, and sending my letters by every opportunity. The weather is delightful."

"Lairg, by Golspie,
31*st May* 1834.

"Here we are, arrived at the scene of action, and just about to commence business. I wrote from Inverness on Wednesday, on the afternoon of which day we set out for Invergordon, in a stage-coach lent us for the purpose by the innkeeper, and drawn by the nags which we had purchased in the morning. They seem to be turning out remarkably well, being sure, sound, and steady, though not very swift. We had two ferries to cross before reaching Invergordon, and the beasts jumped into the boats like sea-horses. Indeed, my own belief is that they have web-feet. We arrived at the last-named place just before dark, and found our boat and carriage waiting us, and all

in good order after its voyage from Newhaven. After a good sleep and no snoring, we took breakfast and departed for Tain. We found that the boat travelled upon its wheels very smoothly. As the day was fine, we did not mount, but followed it to Tain, collecting insects, &c., by the road. In a small marsh we got a great many *Elaphri, Donaciæ,* &c., and particularly *Blethisa multipunctata,* a fine insect resembling a very large *Elaphrus.* In a wood we took the small green under-wing butterfly (*Thecla rubi*), which I had never before seen alive; a very fine bright long-shaped *Coccinella,* and a *Galeruca* not in my collection. We dined at Tain, which is on the Dornoch Frith, and in the cool of the afternoon proceeded to Bonar Bridge. The scenery along the shore upwards was very beautiful, particularly just after sunset, for before that time, as we were walking in a westerly direction, the glare of light upon the water was rather bright and dazzled our *een* as we tried to gaze upon the wooded promontories in advance, or the snow-spotted peaks of the far-mountains. But as soon as the sun was down we enjoyed the fine amphitheatre of western hills, and the beautiful glimpses, neither few nor far between, of the Dornoch Frith, as we looked down upon it through the old pine woods through which our path conducted us to Bonar Bridge. We got on twenty-six miles that day, which was a fair trial both for man and beast.

"We made only thirteen miles yesterday, from Bonar Bridge to Lairg. We fished up the river Shin on our way. J. Jardine and I each killed a grilse in addition to our trouts; the rest of the party only caught the last named fishes. Our grilse, however, were *kelts*, that is, had not run fresh from the sea, but had been kept in the river all winter, owing to the closing of the cruives which had prevented their making their way to the ocean waters. We spent some hours on our way at Invershin upon the Oikel, conversing with Mr Young, who has the chief charge of the fisheries. Soon after our arrival here last night, we discovered a nest of the black-throated diver. I believe it had not been previously seen by any one, though the bird has been long known to breed in Britain. We took the eggs, for they sell in London for a guinea a-piece. There are an immense number of cuckoos hereabouts, so many that one sees them flying about from tree to tree, and the people tell us that they often find their eggs in the nests of small birds, particulary in that of the tit-lark. To-day Sir William and Mr Selby are going to try Loch Shin for the great loch trout; Dr Greville and myself try a smaller loch among the hills, and hope to find a few insects: we got *Carabus clathratus* here last year. Now, dearest wife, the party are all keen to be off, as we have breakfasted, and they are scolding me for writing. God bless you all!"

"Lairg, by Golspie,
3*d June* 1834.

"Although I have been disappointed in receiving my Saturday's letter, which I fear has not been sent to the post-office in time for the north mail of that day, yet I shall not retaliate by allowing an opportunity likely to occur to-morrow to escape. I wrote to you on Saturday morning somewhat hurriedly, for we are generally all pent up in one little room about the size of my thumb, and our occupations are so various and so numerous, that I have scarcely time to collect my senses. The change of life is indeed great, and to a monomaniac like myself who requires some time to shift his ideas, the effect produced is like that of a waking or rather walking dream. Our chief object here was to fish Loch Shin for the great lake trout, and Loch Craggie for another kind, remarkable for beauty of shape and colour and excellence of condition for the purposes of the table. In Loch Shin we have not done much, but in the other loch we have been extremely successful. Selby has made a drawing of one which I killed, a very fine fellow, weighing two pounds and a-half. While fishing Loch Craggie on Saturday, I found a nest of the black-throated diver. The parents made off when they saw me wading towards their little isle, but they left behind them two little black powder-puffs, about the size of *your* hand, which *fuffed* and bit at me when I came

near them. One of them got among the rushes and tried to dive, but it would not do. I took them in my hand, and immediately heard the parents uttering wild cries of anger and anxiety; so I laid them down and went to the other side of the loch, that their wild though sweet home might not be disturbed. The loch is a little one among the hills, with a good sprinkling of natural birch wood at one end. We fished it last year, though unsuccessfully, owing to the violence of the wind. On Monday, we started again for Loch Craggie, Sir William and Selby each armed with their fowling pieces, and much excited by my account of the divers and their woolly young ones. Alas, for sentiment in the hands or hearts of those ruthless destroyers! When I thought of the happy moonlight nights, the bright mornings, the gorgeous sunsets, the balmy twilights which these magnificent birds had enjoyed together, and how little they had dreamed that their wild solitudes, environed by crags and almost covered with water, should be invaded by the authors of 'Ornithology Made Easy,' I almost regretted for the time that I had betrayed their secret. But knowing that Sir William and Mr Selby had spent the greater part of Saturday in a vain attempt to obtain a pair which they had discovered on Loch Shin, I thought it wrong to conceal an ornithological fact of such importance. So I directed them to the island where I knew the birds would be, and the con-

sequences may be supposed. They crept towards the spot, and the divers, less wary than usual, or at least less careful of themselves, from the strength of their parental affection, after swimming up the loch followed by one of the young ones, returned again in search of the other, and coming within range of the marksmen, were both shot dead, along with their little helpless child. I was at this time fishing at some distance, but when I came towards the island I found the gorgeous creatures which I had so lately seen so full of life and vigour, extended cold and stiff upon the shore. They are as large as geese, and are scarcely ever found in this country, except during severe winters. Their breeding places were previously unknown. That same day we discovered also two pair of widgeons, a bird, the summer haunts of which had not been ascertained. I killed fifteen very fine trouts, many of them two pounds weight, and several above it. As eating fish, they surpass any fresh-water fish, except salmon, with which I am acquainted, and they enable us to fare sumptuously every day. We have lamb, good soup or broth, and roasted fowls,—the latter, however, evidently made of Indian rubber. We find our boat answer excellently; we took it up to Loch Craggie in a cart, and brought it down again in the evening without any trouble."

"TONGUE, *8th June* 1834.

. . . . "First, let me say that I had great delight in receiving your Saturday's letter at Lairg on Thursday afternoon. I found I could not enjoy myself till I heard from home, and the rest of the party had no objection to wait till the Thursday's post from Golspie came in. Except the slaughter of the black-throated divers, and the discovery of the widgeons' nests, nothing particular occurred at Lairg. We dissected the trouts of Loch Craggie, and took notes of their structure, &c. In Loch Shin we caught some of the young of the great loch trout, or *Salmo ferox,* and popped them into a barrel of whisky, which we carry with us for that purpose. If you were a sportswoman, I could fill a hundred letters with details touching our capture of the finny race; but I fear such matters would be tedious.

We have already taken several specimens of *Carabus clathratus* and *glabratus,* and other good insects. I have occasionally found the fatigue of the business considerable, the more especially as I had been somewhat sedentary for several months at home; but I think I am improving in strength every day, and I have already got a new skin to one of my hands, and to half of my nose. By the time I get as far as Mrs Scobie's I expect to be as brown as Bacchus and as strong as Hercules. Sir William is most assiduous, and, indeed, the whole party are very active,

and in constant occupation, sketching, collecting, angling, dissecting, eating, and sometimes—sleeping. I fear I am the only dreamer among them; and there are here but too many gray stones to sit upon:—

'I look round on my mother earth,
As if she for no purpose bore me;
As if I were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before me.'

But then comes the thought—the happy thought, that I am not now as I once was, or, at least, deemed myself to be, when wandering of old among bleak moors and desolate mountains, a thing forgotten, or, if remembered, but to be despised. I now feel assured, and grateful in the assurance, that there are some to whom my happiness is dear, who rejoice in my joys and sympathise in my sorrows, and who would not yet that I should cease to be. Wife and children! What strange words these seem to be when I think of my former self, when too often my only thought was but to creep into a hole and die. But what would I not now undertake to promote their comfort and prosperity. Alas! how little can I do. I may, however, assuredly, more earnestly and continually, thank God for surrounding me with so many blessings; and I hope even yet in some measure to redeem what has so often been but a feeble and erring life. The All-seeing Eye alone can perceive the causes of excuse; but then,

that same Eye, how many million faults does it not mark, for ever unperceived by mortal vision! Perhaps it would be well to think, not that our fellow-mortals are often incapable of appreciating our meritorious struggles and resistances to sin, but that they still oftener are unable to detect our rebellious and unchristian thoughts. Yet we often think ourselves martyrs when God is not in all our thoughts; and, execrating the consuming fever of our thirst, we pass unheeded the Fountain of living waters. I find I must close for the present. I shall add a few lines before sealing up.

"*Monday, 9th June.*

"I was interrupted yesterday by the party insisting that I should turn out and join them in a walk. We ascended the hill above Tongue, and enjoyed a magnificent and far-extended view of sea and land. To the west, Ben Hope, and the other great mountains of Sutherland, their summits partly enveloped in clouds; to the east, a great part of Caithness lay in barren blackness; and to the north, a vast expanse of calm but heaving waters of the ocean lay between us and the distant Orkney Islands, which were distinctly visible in the distance, with spots of snow upon their solemn but serene summits. Immediately beneath our feet was the Kyle of Tongue, a salt-water loch of great beauty when the tide is in, and the swelling waters come close upon the green pastures and straggling birch woods

of the indented shore. The coast in general was bold and rocky, with fine headlands running into the sea, and between them little quiet bays of golden sand, with here and there a cottage on a cliff, or a few fishing-boats floating in their then peaceful havens, or drawn ashore upon the safer beach. But it was easy to see how, on the approach of the ambiguous autumn, or when the raging tempests of winter were let fairly loose, what a dread turmoil would take place in all those narrow channels, and how the tyrannous ocean would war and chafe against that iron-bound shore.

"On leaving Lairg, on Thursday, we travelled in our boat as far as Altnaharrow, a poor, smoky, forlorn place, which pretends to be an inn. We stayed there two nights and one day, all sleeping on the same floor. We then fished Loch Naver (in which I killed a good salmon) and some other lochs. Sir William got a black water-rat, the same as that variety found near Aberdeen, and which some think a new species. Leaving Altnaharrow on Saturday morning, we travelled partly in our boat and partly on foot, fishing such lochs as lay in our way, and reached Tongue about seven to dinner. It is a most comfortable place. I have a little spare room to myself; and the feeding is excellent. The scenery is so fine that we shall stay a day or two, particularly to ascend Ben Loyal, a fine mountain, close at hand. We have also to fish Loch Loyal, &c.

"*Monday Evening.*

"We have just returned from the top of Loch Loyal, after nine hours pretty hard walking. The toil, as Selby's butler remarked, was 'amply repaid' by the view. The said butler is a fine, fat, good-humoured Englishman, with a great turn for geography and natural history. He and T—— are great friends. The post has come in since we returned from our walk; and I am very thankful for dear H——'s letter, though it is but of a mingled yarn. I fear you have been far from well; but I hope and pray that ere now the enemy is gone, and that this letter will at last find you at the Hill. Give my most affectionate regards to all."

"Tongue, 11*th June* 1834.

"We have been very comfortably quartered here since Saturday afternoon, and have done a good deal of business. Yesterday, besides killing ten or twelve dozen of fine lake trout, we captured two specimens of *Salmo ferox*, or great loch trout of the Highlands. They were young ones; but each weighed between five and six pounds. They had never been killed with the rod in this part of the country before, although their existence was well known, as they are seen at the mouths of the burns about spawning time, and are said to attain to the weight of eighteen or twenty pounds.

"I mentioned in my last letter that we had ascended Ben Loyal, as it is called (it is spelt Layghal). It was a heavy pull, being very steep and about three thousand feet high—a respectable mountain when you consider that the ocean waters lave its base, and that consequently it does not rise, as many others do, from an elevated plain. There are some tremendous precipices on its sides, where eagles build, 'and ravens spread their plumy vans at ease,' and on the summit are several large lumps of rock, each about as large as St George's Church. I took five specimens of *Carabus glabratus*, during the ascent, and found several specimens of a small *Colymbetes* in pools of rain water on the very summit. I also caught a large and beautiful barred *Musca*, but he escaped through the flappers.

"The chief ornithological feature of this neighbourhood, is the immense number of thrushes which inhabit the little birch woods, and render musical the else silent and solitary valleys. To-day when I was catching insects, a beautiful robin came and watched me with curious eye, and seemed to take me for some large mysterious bird. I also saw a sweet little gold-finch preening himself upon a birken spray, and in the uplands you cannot walk a hundred yards without a pair of golden plovers flying around you, and uttering their wild and wayward cries. Waders and water-fowl are numerous, and we yesterday found a widgeon's nest with six eggs, which we *harried*,

seeing that the breeding of that species in Britain was unknown. This quarter of the island seems, in fact, to be the great breeding quarters of many of those birds which visit the southern districts only during winter. We this morning dissected one of the large trouts, measured his guts, counted his teeth, and compared his internals with those of the common species. Selby made a portrait in oils of the other. For a day or two among the birch woods, we have been catching specimens of a very large hymenopterous insect, allied to *Tenthredo*, but with knobbed antennæ. He is as big as *Sirex gigas*, thicker but not quite so long. I know the genus, though, as usual, I forget his name. Sir William is off this morning to a marsh among the mountains, where it is reported by one of the Duke's gamekeepers who has been deputed to attend us, that a small species of snipe, called the Jack-snipe, builds its nest. It is not yet known as a British builder. We have had a couple of eagles eggs' brought to us just now. But I must stop for the present; we leave Tougue to-morrow. Good bye."

"Eribol, 12*th June*.

"We left Tongue this morning in our carriage, but were long impeded in our progress by a short frith or ferry, called the Kyle of Tongue, which, under ordinary circumstances, we might almost have swam across, but the ferry-

boats were small, and our carriage rather lengthy, and we had a *kittle* job in getting it shipped. We had to unpack all the things from the boat, to lift the boat from its wheels, and after launching it on the salt water, to tie it to the hinder end or stern of the ferry-boat. We then contrived, by means of large planks, to run the wheels into the said ferry-boat. There had not been so much to do at Tongue for many a-day. These matters kept us till the day was far advanced, although, as usual, we had breakfasted early. After passing the ferry, our route lay along the desolate moor of Moin, a tract almost impassable before the making of the present road. However, it does not extend far, and about half-way there is a hut or house of refuge for the destitute. I met a messenger who inquired for 'yin Mr Wilson.' I pled guilty to being that obnoxious individual, and was immediately presented with a letter, which I found to be from Mrs Scobie, who had just heard of our having entered Lord Reay's country, and hastened to request that whenever it was convenient, all of us would make her house our home. In fact, we could hardly have managed to see that part of the country again without doing so, but it was particularly pleasant to be met with such frank and open hospitality. On crossing the moor of Moin we came to Hope Ferry, at the foot of Loch Hope. By this time, however, the 'sky lowered and muttered thunder,' and the rain was falling in torrents. We were not sure how the

fishing in the Hope would do, and there were rather too many of us to remain at the Ferry, so we drove on a few miles further to the house where we now are, on the shores of Loch Eribol. We were very wet when we arrived, but peat fires were soon blazing in all quarters, and articles which Mrs —— would have died sooner than have named, were speedily produced and jumped into. Oh, what a scene is a regular shifting in a Highland inn after a soaking day! We had a good dinner of its kind, and soon after a few cups of tea, and we are now all occupied in our various pursuits.

"We retrace our steps a mile or two to-morrow, to try the fishing in the river Hope."

"KEOLDALE, 18*th. June* 1834.

"I have just heard of an opportunity of sending off a few lines this evening, so I embraced it to tell you how comfortable we have been here for some days. We arrived on Saturday night and this is Wednesday afternoon. The party have been pretty active on the whole, although the substantial cheer and cheerful converse of the evening somewhat interfere with the sticking of our beetles and other important operations. The morning dram is a source of great merriment among the majority, although the Doctor, as in duty bound, does not fail to protest against such an abuse.

"On Monday we drove to a celebrated natural excavation in the limestone rock along the shore, called the Smoo cavern. There is a river, a short way up the country, which jumps down a big hole in the earth with a horrible roar, and after rumbling and tumbling about in darkness for some time, nobody knows where, it comes rolling out of a recess in the inside of the Smoo cave, through which it meanders, and flowing gently along, it seeks the daylight, and then rolls into the sea. Now the cave itself is like a great cathedral supported by natural pillars. Its vast recesses are at first dim and mystical, but as the eye begins to discern the great projections of the fretted roof, it also perceives that that roof is gorgeously adorned with many and various hues of green and orange, and brown and blue, arising from the quantity of moss and lichens with which the rocks, themselves of richest colours, are adorned. From the interior, looking eastward, there is a fine ocean view, the sparkling waves contrasting finely with the blackness of the cavern roof, which seems to span the heavens as with an arch. Several sketches were taken of this truly singular scene, which, however rude and imperfect, when compared with the 'dread magnificence' of nature, may yet serve to convey to you some feeble notion of its character.

"On Tuesday morning we paid our respects at the manse, where we saw the marks left by the lightning that entered the room and broke all the windows last winter.

"By the by, on the preceding evening, we set a net on one of the lakes, to ascertain the truth of the reported existence of Char, and next morning we found half-a-dozen entangled in the meshes. We drew and dissected one, and put the remainder into spirits. After calling at the manse yesterday, we proceeded to Far-out Head, a high and rocky promontory. The coast view was very fine, and we caught some good insects; but as the minister was to dine with us, we returned without finishing our exploration. We renewed our visit to-day, and found two fine eagles resting on the promontory. I am sorry to add that during these last two days I have been so annoyed by rheumatism in my left shoulder, and up the same side of my neck, as to be unable to handle my rod. We leave this for Scourie to-morrow at five in the morning; at present it is almost light here all night. Excuse haste, for Mrs Scobie's messenger waits. Oh for my letters at Inchnadamff, where I hope we shall be by Saturday night."

"INCHNADAMFF, 24*th June* 1834.

"We reached this much-wished-for haven only last night (Monday), and I was at first sorely disappointed by finding nothing but an old newspaper and a letter from worthy Captain Graham. I was soon after so far relieved by Sir W. Jardine opening a parcel and handing out a letter for me in your hand, which you may suppose I was

not long in devouring. Its date, however, was not very recent (the 14th), and being written in bed, gave no very strong assurance of your being as I have so often prayed you might be. But a few minutes after our arrival, the post came in and brought me a delightful bundle, among which yours of the 20th, 21st, and H——'s of the 19th, were singled out and eaten. Of all things be sure to be as much in the open air as possible, that you may have a proper pennyworth of your native air, and that I may have the happiness of finding you on my return as strong as an American turkey.

"We begin work generally about half-past five in the morning, and seldom finish till the commencement of the ensuing day, so that we have seldom less than sixteen hours' labour of one kind or another, although it is varied in such a way as greatly to lessen the fatigue.

"We left good Mrs Scobie's on Thursday last, at an early hour. We had a long day's journey to Scourie, nearly thirty miles. We sat, however, very comfortably in our boat, taking a walk of a mile or two now and then when the ground was hilly, which was a relief both to ourselves and horses, particularly the latter. The road was excellent—thanks to that great highwayman, the late Duke of Sutherland—although the country through which it lay was for the most part very bare and desolate, the hills low and craggy, with their intermediate valleys filled

up with innumerable small lochs (liker ponds than lakes), commonly so called. There were, however, some fine mountain ranges within view. It was latish in the evening before we reached Scourie, where, as the landlady was aware of our intended arrival, we found everything in very good order, with each a separate bed. On Friday and Saturday we drove back each day about six or seven miles of the road by which we had arrived, as far as Laxford Bridge, where there is excellent fishing. Our carriage and horses waited for us at a shepherd's hut, and then we drove back to Scourie to a late evening dinner, cakes and milk being attainable in the meantime by such as wished them. For myself, I was not in fishing order, on account of the rheumatism in my arm and shoulder, but I tried to be useful to the others, and contrived to pick up a few insects. I am now almost entirely free from pain. We enjoyed some very striking views by ascending a mountain, or at least a part of it, called Stack, not far from Laxford. We were at one time entirely enveloped in clouds, but still kept creeping along the mountain side, when suddenly the clouds dispersed, or at least opened wide their aërial windows, and shewed us a beautiful valley well clothed with birch woods, with a far-spreading lake in the distance. At the same moment a magnificent rainbow spanned the valley from side to side, and as the clouds rolled along we saw from

time to time gigantic crags above our heads, or in the opposite distance the gray and sterile summits of lofty mountains. No vestige, however, of human dwelling was within our view, nor anything to remind us that this earth was the abode of other beings than ourselves."

"INCHNADAMFF, 27*th June* 1834.

"I again indulge myself by writing a few lines, as there is a post to-morrow morning from this to Golspie. As there is also an end to all human undertakings, our various exertions in this quarter are now drawing to a close. We propose proceeding southwards on Monday morning, but I fear we must for some time travel slowly, as our cattle have a considerable weight to draw.

"It does not appear that we can proceed from Dingwall through Ross-shire without taking longer time than we can afford, and it is therefore probable that we shall go from Dingwall to Inverness. From the latter place, however, we feel averse to return, per coach, by the Highland road, exactly as we came, and we therefore hope to dispose of our cattle, and then proceed by the Caledonian Canal, Loch Ness, &c., to Fort-William, and from thence by Ballahulish, Dalmally, Killin, &c., down to Perth or Stirling, and then *home*. Oh, how my heart beats at the thought of my return! I have had a considerable degree of enjoyment, and any want of it has been entirely my own

fault, for everything has been pleasant in itself and prosperous. But you know I left home without exactly feeling satisfied that I ought to have done so. I had no desire to go, and none of that buoyant anticipation of enjoyment which, in glorious youth, is wont to attend as the forerunner of such excursions. Some sensations of mental discomfort have accompanied me all along, with a consciousness, as it were, that I am acting selfishly in making the journey, when the money might have been better spent in ministering to your enjoyments at home. But I hope, by some degree of diligence and activity, to make amends on my return. Alas! what a sad reckoning is now against me for indolence, idleness, and mis-spent time. I know, however, that if I had given up this expedition, it would have vexed you, and although my doing so would have been no disappointment to myself, it might yet have affected or interfered with the arrangements of others. But I hope not to be so long from home again for many a day. I fear, however, that I am not telling you much of what we have been doing here. In fact, owing to the broken weather, we have not been doing very much for some days. Yesterday morning, Colonel Oswald, who has the salmon fishing on the Inver this year, breakfasted with us, on his way to Laxford. We afterwards fished a mountain loch, where we found the fish very fat, and of delicious flavour. We found their interior crammed full

of screws, or fresh-water shrimps, the beasts you may sometimes see in your ewer of a morning. The day, however, soon grew wet and windy, and I could not see without my spectacles, and still less with them. Yet I contrived to capture nine specimens of *Carabus glabratus*. To-day we fished some other lochs, but not very successfully, except as to smallish trouts, which we now despise. The ministers are beginning to be poured into the country along with the rains; to-day I found no less than three on the moors, so we shall no doubt have sermon on Sabbath. Now good-bye, for, as usual, I find that it is *to-morrow morning*. I think you had better tell the gardener to try a small sowing in patches of mignonette and sweet peas, that we may have an autumnal crop. You know how I love the autumn."

"INCHNADAMFF, 29*th June* 1834.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—This is a beautiful Sunday evening. All my friends have gone out to take a walk; so I think I shall write you a letter. I am sitting upstairs at a little window, so small that I can scarcely get my head and shoulders out of it; but when I do take a peep, there is a long bright lake stretching away to the west for many miles, with high bare mountains on every side. Ben More, the highest hill in Sutherland, is just behind the house. It is composed of what is called moun-

tain limestone, and is so bare and craggy on its sides and summit for many thousand acres, that there is scarcely even a blade of grass or a bunch of heather to be seen. Yet there are sweet little birds chirping and singing among the rocks, and just as merry as if they were hopping among the beautiful bushes at Corstorphine Hill. God, who takes care of all His creatures, has given them happy hearts; and I suppose there is little sorrow where there is no sin.

"This is a very wild country. I have sometimes travelled through it for a whole day without seeing a single house, or meeting with a single human being. There were many more people in it formerly; but, a good many years ago, the Countess of Sutherland, to whom it all belongs, was advised to tell all the cottagers and other poor people who lived in the valleys and on the sides of the hills, to go away down to the sea-shore, and become fishermen, that she might let all the land to rich English farmers, who, she was told, would give her far more money. But the people, some of whom were very old, and all of whom loved the little sheltered spots where their fathers and grandfathers had lived for hundreds of years before them, did not wish to live by the sea-shore all together, in little dirty streets, and to learn to fish. They were not afraid of the sea; because the mountain shepherds are just as brave as sailors; and often in the stormy nights of

winter, when the wind is howling among the wild rocks, and the snow is drifting about and covering over everything with which they are acquainted, or might be able to mark their way home, they are obliged to go out and look after their flocks, and see that they have not tumbled into the deep holes which are so common among limestone rocks. But they thought it unkind to be asked to leave their ancient homes by those they had often served and defended; for during the war with the French, hundreds of all the strongest men sometimes joined together under the command of some chieftain whom they loved, and went abroad and fought, 'and spilt their blood like water;' but never thought that, after being worn out with their wounds, and coming home to end their days in peace, they would all be sent away to catch cod and haddocks. So, you see, instead of fishing by the sea-shore, almost the whole of them went away to America, where many of them, with their sons and daughters, are living to this day. It is very true that those to whom the land belongs now get more money from the new comers; but if God saw fit to allow another Bonaparte to rise up among the French, who was determined to conquer all other countries, then it would be very difficult to get such brave men as once dwelt in Sutherland, but are now dwelling by the banks of the great rivers of America. I think, if I had thousands of people under me, I would rather try to make

them good and happy, than drive them away to foreign lands. I think the people here are mostly good. I had not seen many of them till to-day; but the few that remain came over the hills from all quarters to church, and seemed very serious and devout. I sat in the minister's seat, with his wife and two children, and another lady. It was a warm day, and the children began to be very sleepy, poor things. So the lady, who, I suppose, was ashamed of them before strangers, every now and then gave them a little shake. One of them had golden curly hair, and its head shone and glittered in the sunbeams every time that it was *shooken*. The mother tried another plan, and gave them each a bit of sea-biscuit. This did very well for a little; but as soon as the biscuit was done, they fell fast asleep, and nobody disturbed them any more. I confess I was a little sleepy myself at one time; but I bit my tongue, and kept my eyes staring wide; for I was rather afraid that the minister's wife's sister would give me a shake, just as she had the minister's wife's sons. The church is the smallest church you ever saw, not nearly so high as the stable at Woodville, and very little longer; but I doubt not that the prayers of pious Christians ascend as directly to their heavenly Father from that lowly dwelling as from the proudest cathedral. I will not be very long away now. We leave this to-morrow; but till we get to Inverness, we must travel slowly, for our

boat-carriage is very heavy when we are all in it. I expect that everything at Woodville and the Hill will be looking beautiful when I come back. How thankful we ought to be to God for our sweet, happy homes! May God bless my darling daughter, is ever the prayer of your affectionate father."

CHAPTER VI.

Business and Recreation; Sunshine and Shadow.

"The sun upon the Wierdlaw-hill,
In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet,
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;
Though evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.
—The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,—
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me?"—SCOTT.

"Who are the men of history to be admired most? Those whom most things became: who could be considerate in a sick-room, genial at a feast, joyous at a festival, capable of discourse with many minds, large-souled, not to be shrivelled up into any one form, fashion, or temperament. Their contemporaries would have told us, that men might have various accomplishments and hearty enjoyments, and not for that be the less effective in business, or less active in benevolence."—HELPS.

HAVING no professional engagements, it was assumed that Mr Wilson abounded in leisure; but to do all the work which busier men are unable to overtake, is itself an arduous calling. It was the advantage of his learned brethren, that most of them had ostensible occupations, and from any inconvenient intrusion the professor could take refuge in "the business of his class," the doctor and the lawyer in the demands of his "practice," but our friend had no such apology; nor even if he had possessed it, would it have availed a disposition so kind and courteous. He had a deep and true desire to serve his generation: there was no one from whom it was less formidable to ask a favour; and when invited to bear another's burden, no one could lend the helping hand with more unfeigned alacrity. Happy was the board or committee which could enlist his name, for it was sure of a conscientious member; and no less happy was the scientific stranger who sought out his abode, and who, certain of a cordial welcome, not unfrequently commenced an enduring and delightful intimacy. Happy was the secretary who had such a colleague,

and not less happy was the editor who had such a neighbour. But happier still was the man himself, who, when an emergency arose, could always meet it, and who, when the forthcoming serial was arrested by a desertion or a downbreak, possessed the ready pen and readier zeal which supplied the gap and saved the capitol. If Sidney Smith claimed it as his function, that he acted in society as a general amalgam; in the literary and scientific world of Edinburgh—the lecturing world not included, and his own chosen pursuits superadded—Mr Wilson might have claimed it as his province to be the universal succedaneum.

His engagement with the *Encylopædia Britannica* amounted to a virtual editorship; for it made him responsible for all the natural history, and, as happens to all editors, his subordinates sometimes left him in the lurch. The following letter was called forth by such a conjuncture:—

TO SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, BART.

"WOODVILLE, 11*th May* 1835.

"I have not time to enter into particulars; suffice it to say that I have been grievously disappointed by what I cannot call otherwise than the misconduct of an individual, to whom years ago I had intrusted the article Ichthyology for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. To that individual I have written and spoken every two or three months on the subject, have sent books and other necessary

articles, and it never entered into my mind for a moment to suppose that he was not advancing steadily in a matter which was originally consigned to him much more on his own account than on mine. Judge, then, of my surprise and disappointment on being informed a day or two ago, in answer to an intimation that the said article might be required in a month or thereby, that other engagements made it impossible for him to undertake it if it were required in anything like that time. I shall only add that these other engagements, of a somewhat advantageous nature, were bestowed on my own recommendation at a period subsequent to his written pledge regarding the said Ichthyology. All this, of course, is no excuse as between myself and the principal editor, who takes no concern in my engagements, and to whom I stand pledged altogether independent of other individuals. I think it likely that not less (though certainly not more) than seven weeks will be allowed from about this time; but even during that period it would be hard work for any one individual, not prepared by any previous study in anticipation, to get up a worthy article on so important a subject. I shall, however, indeed I must, sacrifice all other engagements and work like a horse, and I have no hesitation in applying to you for assistance, which I doubt not you will grant if you can do so consistently with prior duties. All that I wish from you is, that you would undertake an

abstract of the fourth family of Cuvier's Malacopterygian fishes, viz., our friends the *Salmonidæ*. I should like you to adhere in a general way to Cuvier's arrangement, as I must do so myself in the other portions; but, of course, the opinions of species, &c., and other details, to be according to your own views. You are so familiar with this department, that I doubt not you will do it with ease—indeed you probably have all the necessary materials already by you. I assure you your doing it will be a great favour to myself."

His application had been made to one who, like himself, knew what it is to be a friend in need, as the following rescript shews:—

"Woodville, 28*th May* 1835.

"My dear Sir William,—I had the pleasure to receive your response, which is quite satisfactory as far as your *will* is concerned, although your prior engagements seem to run it rather further back than I could wish. Perhaps Selby's being with you during that first week of your return home, may not interfere with your doing something. Of course, I don't care when the thing is begun, if it is only ended in time. I am sitting very close myself, as in duty bound, and am already a long way from the beginning, though I can't say whether I am at all getting towards the end."

In like manner, we find him a few months afterwards come to the rescue of Messrs Oliver and Boyd, whose three volumes on China, got up with great care, and at a great expense, were delayed by the non-appearance of a much desired sketch of Chinese zoology. In a few days he supplied the lacking contribution, and the stranded volumes floating off, enjoyed a prosperous voyage.

At one period, as already mentioned, he took much pains arranging the admirable collections in the College Museum, and besides being a zealous member of the Wernerian Society to the last, he acted as its librarian. To the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh" he never contributed, but no one of its fellows could take a livelier interest in its prosperity, or feel more proud of its fame; nor amongst all his offices of generous friendship, was there ever one more cordially rendered, than his discharge of the secretaryship during the temporary absence, through illness, of Professor J. D. Forbes. For those researches amongst the Alpine and Norwegian glaciers, which had procured for the ardent investigator a celebrity more than European, Mr Wilson felt intense admiration; and when, as a consequence of such researches too eagerly pursued, the health of the professor gave way, Mr Wilson supplied his place with affectionate anxiety, and by the diligence with which he catered for contributions, and edited the "Transactions," and by the affability and address with

which he conducted the business of the Council and of the Society itself, he proved an able and not unsuccessful substitute for his eminent and accomplished friend.

During the later years of his life, Mr Wilson interested himself in territorial churches, and in efforts for improving the dwellings of the poor, and, as an elder, he had considerable outlet in his district and elsewhere, for the tenderness of his sympathy, and for more substantial benefactions. But there were few associations, either benevolent or scientific, which, in later years, engrossed so much of his time and thought as the Fishery Board. In the fishes themselves, as an angler and a naturalist, he felt a certain interest, but as a patriotic Scotchman he felt still more interest in their captors and consumers. The brave and hardy seamen of our northern coasts commanded his highest admiration, and knowing well the finny wealth of those stormy waters, he was anxious that all should be done which proprietors or a government can do, to lessen the dangers, and augment the productiveness of this great branch of national industry. First, in conjunction with Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, and afterwards with the Hon. Bouverie F. Primrose, many were the months which he spent afloat, in order to examine stations, quays, and harbours; many were the days spent in London and elsewhere, urging on official personages points so vitally affecting the food of the community and the defences

of the realm; and many were the memorials for private perusal, and many the articles appealing to periodical readers, which he prepared with infinite labour, in the onerous discharge of his honorary duties.

Betwixt his stated pursuits and such occasional services, the last five-and-twenty years of Mr Wilson's life were abundantly and sometimes excessively occupied; but he neither made himself nor others believe that he was busy. Making no fuss, and never in a bustle, the stranger who found him in a public room writing rapidly, and often interpolating amidst the talk a comic hit or repartee, could hardly have guessed that the sheets he was so fast accumulating were copy for a standard work, or that they would go to the printer untranscribed and with scarcely an erasure. And he himself, whilst producing manuscript sufficient to supply all the zoological professorships of the kingdom, simply because he pocketed no fees, and was not obliged to take down his umbrella every winter's day, and go forth to lecture to a class of students for an hour, used to sigh over himself as one of the unproductive classes, and revert betwixt mournfulness and mirth to the days of the "stickit writership."

So constant were his occupations that he found it hard to secure a holiday. Occasionally, however, he carried off his family to Westmoreland, or some other pleasant hiding-place, and occasionally, as we have seen, he consented to

accompany a party of friends fly-catching or fly-fishing. During a solitary excursion in 1835, he wrote the following letter to his little daughter:

"THE BURN, FETTERCAIRN,
Monday night, 21*st Sept.* 1835.

"MY DEAR LASSIE,—I am sure you will be glad to hear that I will be home in two or three days. The chief pleasure in going from home is the coming back again. What rounds of the garden we will have, and how happy mamma will be, and how Corby will jump for joy! I daresay the leaves are now growing yellow in the face and will soon tumble to the ground, and then, till a little frost comes, everything will look wet and dirty. Never mind, there are plenty of coals at the canal, and we will keep good fires, and have plenty of fun within doors. Mamma says there has been very bad weather since I went away, but on the whole it has been good here. To-morrow we are to take a long drive to Loch Lee, which is about fifteen miles from this. In that part of the country, almost a hundred years ago, an old woman hanged herself, and the custom is, when any one commits suicide, to bury them where the lands of two lairds meet. Well! they tried to carry this woman there, though it is a long way off among the hills. A storm of snow came on—they were all like to perish with cold and hunger; so, long before they came to

the proper place, they just threw her into a wet black hole in the moor. Well! what do you think?—not long ago when all the people themselves were dead (though their sons and daughters remembered the story, because they had been told it by their fathers and mothers), the old woman was discovered by a shepherd looking out of the hole in the moss; and there she lies at this present moment, and may be seen by any one that chooses. I shall shake hands with her, I hope, to-morrow. Would you like me to bring her home to Woodville?"

With his tender feelings and strong affections, it was sometimes well for Mr Wilson that he was obliged to be busy. Like Baron Cuvier, who sought to dull the anguish caused by the death of his lovely daughter Clementine, by burying himself in absorbing study, many a scholar has had cause to be thankful for the task which tore him away from the too near companionship of sorrow. So was it in 1835, when a double bereavement had befallen Mr Wilson in the death of two of his sisters within a fortnight of one another, but when, in the midst of his grief, he was obliged to sit down for eight unbroken weeks to an article on Ichthyology; and so was it destined to prove in a lesser degree under the sorer visitation which overtook him in 1837, when he lost his beloved and excellent wife.

After the death of Mrs Foster, with his characteristic

severity in self-reviewing, John Foster says :—"When a person's ill health is habitual, and complaints seldom uttered, it is the fault of associates, who are themselves in exempt condition, not to shew or feel the due attention or sympathy. And it now comes upon me, with some degree of regret and self-reproach, that I too seldom testified the due sympathetic interest on this subject. It was an interest which she most rarely claimed, and, therefore, should have been the more spontaneously given. Not that I am deeply accusing myself in this respect. I loved and valued her deeply, cordially, and continually, and delighted to reciprocate her devoted affection ; but it is strange to observe how anything that was *less* than the most watchful attention can now come back to memory as a cause of regret." But even from the gentlest measure of such upbraidings Mr Wilson was saved by the uniform solicitude and tenderness with which he devoted himself to a wife who had all the stronger claim on his sympathy from the spirit with which she bore her infirmities, and the quiet steadfastness with which she discharged domestic duties, even in days of great personal suffering. Nevertheless, although free from compunction, and blissfully assuaged by the hope full of immortality, his grief was great ; and it was well for him that an unusual pressure of literary engagements necessitated the bestowment of some thought on other themes. During the two following winters Mr

Wilson took a house in George Square, which brought him nearer his Edinburgh friends.

The first letter after this event which has come into our possession was written during a short fishing excursion, in which he was tempted to join his friends, Sir T. D. Lauder and John Kirkpatrick, Esq.

"ABERFOYLE, 15*th June* 1838.

"I hope you have been wearying to hear from me. I snatch a few minutes while Sir Thomas treats himself to a pipe, though smoking by no means makes him hold his tongue. The chief disadvantage of his unfailing good humour and cheerfulness is the contrast which these excellent qualities offer to my own depression, and which, I fear, may make Kirkpatrick suppose that I am a sulky rascal, which I don't think I naturally am. But of this I leave you to judge for yourself. We had but a murky and indifferent voyage up to Alloa on Monday; but we sat near the funnel, and kept our backs warm. Kirkpatrick met us at Alloa, from whence we walked up to Tullibody, a nice, old-fashioned place, where we were well received. We started in a shandrydan on Tuesday morning early, and got to Aberfoyle by about one o'clock, so as to admit of our walking up to Lochard and enjoying a few hours fishing before dinner. We killed only eight or ten, but they were very fine fish; and the evening being

beautiful, with a fine sun-set behind Benlomond, which stands like a giant at the head of the loch, we enjoyed ourselves somewhat. When I talk of enjoyment, it is, perhaps, more in reference to the general feeling of the party than my own individual feelings, which cannot be otherwise than disconsolate; for the greater the apparent resources of enjoyment within my reach, the more bitterly do I feel the dread change which has befallen us in the removal of one whose happiness I often hoped to connect with some such scene as that which is now before my eyes. During my former excursions my chief pleasure was in writing to, or receiving letters from, her whose place knows her no longer; and if for a moment the sun seems to shine as it was wont, and a sense of pleasure passes through my heart, then a wave of darkness seems to overshadow me, and I feel as if it were selfish and unkind to others even to seek for any happiness. But all this, I know, proves the low and earthly nature of my hopes and aspirations, and how unable I am to raise my thoughts to that brighter world, where we know there are 'many mansions.' I pray God I may be enabled by degrees to wean myself from all these 'vexing thoughts,' by which for some time past I have been so disquieted. We know unto whom we may go when weary and heavy laden, and He will give us rest. I hope you have been enjoying the two fine days we have had. I was thankful for them,

fully as much on R——'s account as my own. We went up yesterday to Loch Con, a wild Highland region of craggy rocks, with a rich sprinkling of oaks and birches in the lower grounds, and towering mountains all around. I fished pretty steadily all day, chiefly to keep my mind from wandering into the unseen world; but when I looked up into the sky, and saw the glory of the castellated clouds of snow, how could I help rambling away from this 'dim spot,' serenely beautiful though it was, to the bright array of that imperishable land, where there is fulness of joy for evermore? In my present state of mind I must mix all things together. The angling in Loch Con is not very inspiriting. The trouts are few, but very fine. We only killed ten, of which seven fell to my share, and three to Sir Thomas."

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

"CASTLE-CRAIG, BY NOBLE-HOUSE,
10*th October* 1838.

"MY DEAREST LASSIE,—On the whole the weather has been charming, and I have been enjoying myself as much as I can well do, considering that I am away from my sweet home, and that I cannot help reflecting on the days that are past, and that can now be recalled no more for ever. We were often asked to come out here long ago. Had we done so, there might have been great enjoyment;

but it was the will of God to ordain it otherwise, and therefore I ought not to grieve or think myself desolate when alone in these melancholy woods, for God is ever with me, and all who love Christ the Saviour are ever beneath the shadow of His wings. I wish I was always more cheerful for your sakes; but we know that we are not willingly afflicted, and if my discomforts of mind and body have the effect of weaning me from this world, and fixing my affections on things above, happy will it be for me and mine. How thankful should I be that while one beloved parent, who so deeply desired your happiness, has been removed from earthly struggles, you have so affectionate a friend and teacher in dear H——, whom may God bless for all she does for you! Both Johnnie and yourself have it in your power to give her what she will think her highest human reward, by your fearing God, obeying His commandments, loving one another, and being gentle and kind to all around you. This do, as a faithful follower of Christ, whose sinless nature we cannot approach unto, but whose divine example may, by God's grace, when daily dwelt on, ennoble our thoughts and purify our actions, so that we grieve not the Holy Spirit. When weary and heavy laden, as all must often be during our pilgrimage here, let us cast our burden on One who will not leave us nor forsake us. While thus depending upon God and the Saviour whom He sent, let us enjoy with a grateful heart

whatever earthly blessings are within our reach. Let us cultivate and increase our human friendship and affections, and believe that although sin has made this world a world of sorrow, yet that there is much true happiness at the command of the children of God, among whom I earnestly pray my own may ever be. When I sat down to write to you, my beloved daughter, it was not my intention to write you a little sermon, though, perhaps, it ought to have been. If I speak but seldom to you of sacred things, believe it is not that they are absent from my mind, but that the equally strong affection, and much greater knowledge and capacity of your beloved mother made my services less essential, and that still, by the goodness of God, you enjoy the instructions of your dear H——. But yet I say to you, now and always, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'"

In 1839, the scene of a little trip was London, and his first letter was to his son. Its tone is abundantly sprightly, as befits the subject and his youthful correspondent, then a school-boy at the Academy.

2 Stanhope Place, Hyde Park, London,
18*th July* 1839.

"I have been twice to the Zoological Gardens. The live Cameleopards, three in number, are, of course, the

most curious and surprising of all the beasts. They are extremely mild in their manners, with sweet faces and beautiful black eyes, very like many of the ladies I see in Hyde Park, only far prettier than most of them, and with longer and more graceful necks. As they don't like to stoop down when they browse, their cribs are placed at a considerable height. These are merely small baskets like fish-creels, of open texture, hung upon the wall and filled with a dry *wispy*-looking plant, neither hay nor clover. They often stretch up their necks and pull out their food, without taking the trouble to rise from their sides. The one that had the young one is the least of the three, and scarcely cared at all when her child died. The latter is now stuffed and placed near its mother, but she never looks at it. Now, we know that a sheep whose young has died will keep by the dead body for a long time, and will follow any one even from its sweet solitary pastoral hills into the heart of a crowded city, if he carries the skin of the lamb in his hand.

"The deers and llamas are very fine, and the camels, bisons, &c., of great size. Most of these animals are very tame, but there is an otter which bites every one who is foolish enough to put his hand within its railing. It is kept in a pretty large circular wired enclosure, with a pond in the middle, and a small rock-work island in the centre, with a hollow den for it to sleep in. On each side

of its enclosure are written the words, 'The otter bites;' and when I was there, it had nearly bitten an old woman's toe. I suppose she had ten of them, so the loss of one at her time of life would not have mattered much.

"There are hundreds of parrots, and one entirely yellow, just like a canary in colour. The cranes are very graceful, and of diverse kinds; the bears likewise of diverse kinds, but quite the reverse of graceful. The ducks and geese are likewise *divers* of their kind, and there is a cormorant with a throat that would swallow a rolling-stone.

"The cheetah, or hunting tiger, is the first true one I ever saw. The animal usually shewn under that name is more of a leopard, but the true cheetah has a pale-coloured coat, covered over by numerous small single separate spots, not forming circular groups as in the leopard. We went to see the lions and tigers fed, and their roaring was dreadful. There is a great lot of live dogs, which also at feeding time pretended to be fierce, but I saw that most of them were laughing all the time. One of the largest and finest is a Persian shepherd's dog, as big as a Newfoundland, which uncle M'Neill sent home. He spoke to it in Persian, which made it turn round, but it would not shake its tail or speak to him in return. By the by, there is a Persian cat here (a blue one), which is to be boarded at Woodville till the M'Neills are settled. It is accustomed to be chained up, so there is no fear of our birds."

In subsequent letters to his niece he describes the rehearsal of the Eglinton Tournament, visits to the British Museum, and interviews with various eminent zoologists. "I did not see poor Children, whose wife, I fear, is dying; but Samouelle and both the Grays were very civil. What I admire in these people is thèir devotion to their own business. They seem to look upon London just as a great ornithological or entomological world, and care no more about Hyde Park or the House of Commons than they do about Kirkaldy or Canonmills. It would be well for some of us if we could care keenly for anything." "Young White was delighted with the Java insects, six or seven of which were not in the Museum, although Mr Children had them in his private collection. I have got a few things from them, and might have got more, if I had been in a taking humour."

"*Wednesday, 24th July* 1839.

"On Tuesday of last week I lunched at Blackheath with the Hays, and went through Greenwich Hospital. Near the Observatory, in Greenwich Park, I saw a man with two other men. He stared at us, and at everything, and I stared at him. None of our party discerned who it was, till I told them: and I had no business to know; but instinct told me it could be nobody but Lord Brougham, and so it was. Saturday being a closed

day at the British Museum, I went there by invitation and went through the rest of the Entomological Collection. Saw Mr Children, who is a gentlemanly man, and apologised for being unable to shew me any hospitality. I knew well by sad experience how sick at heart he might then be. On Sunday, to church twice. Monday evening, the House of Lords. As we entered, the Duke of Wellington was speaking. He appeared to much greater advantage, and with a more commanding air, in plain clothes, and with his hat off, than on horse-back in the Park. He evidently rules the House of Lords, and knows that he does so. He has a very fine appearance when he stands up speaking. His features being large, his neck rather long, and his chest broad, he has the aspect of a tall man, though he is not so. As soon as he had done speaking he *plumped* down, and pulled his hat over his eyes, perhaps to shade them from the fast-failing daylight which streamed upon him through the tall Gothic windows. At this time there was nothing visible but a hat and a large chin. As soon as a man came in with a taper at the point of a long pole, to light the wax-candles in three or four large chandeliers above their lordships' heads, he threw himself back, pushed up his hat, and followed every candle as it was lighted, from the beginning to the end of the illumination, exactly as I myself, an idle, unaccustomed stranger, might have done had I not been

staring at him all the time. He appeared almost intent upon this, although several lordly statesmen were delivering their speeches in the interval. I was in the front row, and in the course of the evening caught his eye several times. I think he wanted to know how long I would *glower* at him. Lord Brougham spoke several times."

In the close of the following month we find him gone for a few days' fishing in the Tweed, and accompanied by his son and Sir John M'Neill.

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

"INNERLEITHEN, *Friday evening, the day of the month unknown.* [The postmark is *August* 31, 1839.]

"Uncle M'Neill (tell H—— she still spells that family name extremely wrong) left us yesterday morning about five minutes after seven; and in spite of my usual morning idleness, I was up and stirring to give him a cup of coffee and my company to the coach office. John, I am sorry to say, had suffered all night from toothache (the effect, I doubt not, of wading), so I allowed him to snooze on till nine. I suppose that by this time you will have received my letter. I think I told you we had gone up for some hours to St Mary's Loch. The day was raw and *gusty* (this is the French for disgusting); and the scene, though

interesting, was less beautiful than when I saw it for the first time, one still autumn day in the year 1834. The lake was then as smooth as glass, and reflected the green grassy hills so perfectly that you could scarcely tell where the shore commenced and the water terminated; but t'other day the little waves were chafing and roaring in a perfect rage. Poor things! they do not know what they will meet with in their after course of life towards their ocean of eternity, and how much happier they are, surrounded by pure pastoral hills, than when acting as scavengers to the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, sweeping fish-guts into the everlasting sea. But so it ever is, not only with lakes and lochs, but lads and lassies—still pressing onwards, onwards, for a few brief years; then standing still to ponder dubiously the amount of gain, and then finding little worthy even of remembrance but that 'crystal youth,' so carelessly cast away, yet no more to be recalled than can the mountain dew-drops from the slimy sea. We have had but little sport; yet John seems well pleased with his doings. The angling here seems much inferior at this season to what it is in spring. The scenery, however, is beautiful; and when I sat me down, towards day's decline, by the side of this melancholy stream, and looked up to the ruins of Elibank Castle, and thought of the years that had passed since I had last mused by its shattered walls, alas! how mournful was the

remembrance! The 'great magician,' he who so devotedly loved the Tweed, that even in the valley of the shadow of death its murmuring was music to his ears, where was he? That mighty minstrel, whose eye had so often delighted in those varying lights and shadows which my feeble vision still saw adorning the green mountains in undiminished glory, was now in the 'narrow house.' This very day, amid all the pomp and proud emblazonry of the so-called tournament, how few will think of him whose creative genius brought to life and light the little that we know and feel of knightly prowess! Sir Walter has been much in my mind since I came here; and every beautiful hill or gracéful bend in the river that I see brings him to my remembrance; for I know how every feature of the Tweed was a part almost of himself. Our present intention is to be home on Tuesday before dinner; but don't be uneasy. We may write again. Adieu, beloved."

The summer of 1841 was devoted to a somewhat extensive exploration of the Scottish coasts and islands, in the company of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, and on board the government cutter, the *Princess Royal*. The voyage lasted nearly a hundred days, that is, from the 17th of June till the 12th of September, and, as usual, its incidents were reported in long and lively letters home. On

his return, he was persuaded to revise these letters, and towards the close of next year, he published, in two volumes, "A Voyage round the Coasts of Scotland and the Isles," a book rich in poetry and humour; and, with its magnificent descriptions and amusing information, still the best guide to the romantic regions which he visited; or, to those who have not courage for a yacht-voyage, the best substitute for an actual survey.

As everything is interesting, which throws light on the creations of Sir Walter Scott, we transcribe from one of Mr Wilson's Shetland letters, a passage which he himself has not published:—

TO MISS SYM, BRANDON PLACE, GLASGOW.

"While at Lerwick, I met with a strong illustration of what has often struck me elsewhere, namely, that go where one might, and however restricted the range of their general acquaintance, some one is foregathered with, who serves as a link to connect the present with the past, in relation even to one's own particular friends and family. When I landed in Shetland, I certainly did not suppose that there existed in that 'Ultima Thule,' a single individual who had ever heard of me or mine, unless the fame of certain literary relations, such as Miss Sym of Glasgow, or Professor Wilson of Edinburgh, might, in some

measure, have made them familiar with both the paternal and maternal name. Be this as it may, I was told that an *elderly* lady, a Mrs Grierson, was very anxious that I should call upon her. Thinking it unlikely (as I had been already two days in Lerwick) that any *young* lady would be so, I accepted the invitation of 'mine ancient,' and waited upon her accordingly. I found her to be the eldest daughter of a Captain Grant of Rippochy, of whom, in bygone days, I had often heard my mother tell. He had been billeted, I believe, upon my father, probably before I was born; a strong attachment sprang up between them, and he and his wife continued to reside in the Paisley house for months, and carried on acquaintance and correspondence with our people for many a year. Of all this you may probably remember more than I ever heard tell of. I myself well recollect a Miss Helen Grant, and another sister, visiting Queen Street when I was a boy, one of them, a fair-haired woman, with a largish longish nose; and I have a vague notion of their living, during one or more of these visits, with a Mr Manderson, an apothecary, who was afterwards Provost of Edinburgh. Of course it was very interesting to me to hear, in that far distant land, this worthy Mrs Grierson so eloquent in the praises of my parents. I do not know that it was ever my fortune before to hear any one talk of my father as a person whom they had known, excepting, of course, yourself, and others

of my immediate relations. I sat a good deal with her, and as she seemed to be fond of talking, which I am not, she had her will. But what struck me as a singular fact in her history was this: You are probably aware, that her father and mother lost their life owing to the well meant and affectionate kindness of one of their daughters (whether Mrs Grierson or not I cannot say) who placed a chauffer of coals in what she feared might be a damp or airless room, in which her parents were to sleep. They were both found suffocated next morning. The knowledge of this dreadful catastrophe is, of course, not new either to myself or you. But this other related fact, or rather fiction, seems to have sprung out of it, though not that I know of traced to its source, either by John Lockhart, or any other of Sir Walter Scott's biographical commentators. In the novel, called the 'Pirate,' the scene of which is laid in Shetland, a wild, almost mad enthusiast is described under the name of Norna of the Fitful Head. She somewhere, in the course of the work, discloses her own early history, and the dire calamities which had befallen her. The most fatal and overwhelming of these resulted from her closing her parents' bed-room door, which she found ajar one morning at an early hour, when about to fulfil an assignation with her lover. Her parents both died in consequence, from suffocation, and remorse drove her to insanity. Now what has this to do with Mrs Grierson,

who certainly bears about her none of the wild eccentricities of Norna of the Fitful Head? Not much essentially, though I doubt not, it was the narration of the Grant tragedy that furnished Sir Walter Scott with both the designation of Norna, and the most awful event in her history. Mrs Grierson's husband (a Shetland laird) was proprietor of Fitful Head, the most south-western portion of Shetland, and she herself is at present Mrs Grierson, senior, of the same. I doubt not that when Scott in the course of his Shetland voyage passed by the magnificent promontory so named, and inquired its owners or occupiers, he might learn the fate of Mrs Grierson's parents, and would afterwards entwine that sad portion of her own or sister's history in his fictitious picture of Shetland scenery and manners."

As Dr George Wilson has remarked in his beautiful tribute to the memory of Mr Wilson,* "His mind was essentially a poetical one, and he strongly sympathised with that comparatively small class of scientific men who find food for the imagination as well as for the intellect in their studies, and employ both in prosecuting them." In early life especially, he read with avidity works of imagination, and was familiar with the masterpieces of British genius. Byron became a great favourite, and he

* In the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*, July 1856.

could repeat the whole of "Childe Harold." But no one so entirely seized each sympathy, and revealed to himself so much of the inner world and of the wealth around us everywhere as William Wordsworth. To the close of life, if any line of the laureate was repeated, he could always continue the quotation, and amongst all the devotees who repaired to Rydal Mount, no one could be a more intense admirer. Soon after his marriage, he spent a summer at his brother's beautiful Elleray, and the first time that he went to call on the poet, "his mind's father,"* he was so nervous and excited that he would not allow Mrs Wilson or any one to accompany him. A few days afterwards, however, as the ladies were sitting in the drawing-room, he rushed out exclaiming, "Wordsworth! Wordsworth!" and sure enough Wordsworth came across the lawn, and entering by the open window, spent with them a long and delightful day. The acquaintance thus begun lasted for more than twenty years, and in the attractions which so often drew Mr Wilson to Westmoreland, one of the very chiefest was the shrine of "The Excursion."

When Mr Wilson published his "Voyage," he sent Wordsworth a copy. The reader will be amused by the *naïveté* of the criticism, which assumes that his correspondent was not "practised in writing for the press." Although so familiar with the living forms around him,

* See page 92.

and so accurate in describing them, the poet was not much acquainted with books of natural history; and so little of an egotist or pedant was Mr Wilson, that one might have lived with him a century without ever suspecting that he had published anything. Conversely, it might be feared that some good naturalists are little acquainted with the poems of Wordsworth. Mr Wilson had an entomological acquaintance of high attainments, who had spent all his days buried in beetles, and who had never heard the name of Sir Walter Scott till Mr Wilson mentioned it to him.

"RYDAL MOUNT, 14*th March* '43.

"MY DEAR MR WILSON,—You will almost be at a loss to think what has become of me, I have been so tardy in acknowledging the kind present of your 'Voyage.' If I am not mistaken, I told you that the book would remain at Carlisle till my son William had read it. He was then upon the point of going to Herefordshire, ... and various causes have kept him from Carlisle seven weeks, so that I have not long had your book in my possession. But I am now enabled to say, that though I have not read every part of it, it has given me very great pleasure, both on account of the interesting and rarely visited regions you passed through, but also by the manner in which you have described what you saw. Your pages

abound with lively pictures, and not unfrequently occurs a very happy and original expression, such as 'the small pure *breathing places* through the deep blue sky,' in your animated picture of the Loch Corruiskin.

"When there is so much to admire, I feel little scruple in expressing an opinion that here and there your descriptions might advantageously have been pruned down a little, a fault which has arisen entirely from your not being practised in writing for the press. Had I been a man of fifty years, or even sixty (and not of seventy-three, as I shall be if I live to the 7th of next April), I should have wished heartily to be your fellow-voyager. Thanking you again for the pleasure you have afforded me, I remain, my dear Mr Wilson, sincerely your much obliged,

"WM. WORDSWORTH."

The letter inclosed a then unpublished poem on Grace Darling.

TO ADAM WHITE, ESQ.

WOODVILLE, *8th December* 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I was glad to receive your letter this morning, with its miscellaneous intelligence. Poor Hogg! the last day I spent with him was at 'Tibbie's,' on St Mary's Loch. His hand was very unsteady till he had

gone three times from the sitting-room to the kitchen, taking each time a caulker of whisky, which actually seemed to strengthen him for the time, but I suppose, in the long-run, and continued as it was from day to day, was his destruction. I hear nothing of my brother's life of the Scotch worthy. Except a Life of Burns, I understand he has written little or nothing for several years, having never resumed his literary labours (apart from what was required for the duties of his class) since his wife's death. It gives me great pleasure, however, to know that he took up his pen again recently, at least for a day or two, while writing the review (of course a very laudatory one) of Macaulay's magnificent 'Lays of Ancient Rome' in the last number of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

"We passed a delightful autumn in Westmoreland, where we found the 'eternal hills' much as they were of old, when I first knew them some thirty years ago, but the society, of course, greatly changed. However, a few remained of those whom I desired to see, especially old Wordsworth, who is in great force both of mind and body. I regret to say that poor Southey is in a deplorable state, so far as his once splendid intellect is concerned. He knows no one, not even his own wife, and requires to be fed and led like a child."

CHAPTER VII.

Cruises in the Princess Royal, the Dasher, and the Lucifer.

"'Tis the land of deep shadow, of sunshine, and shower,
Where the hurricane revels in madness on high;
For there it has might that can war with its power,
In the wild dizzy cliffs that are cleaving the sky."

—ANDREW PARK.

"I have told you of the Spaniard who always put on his spectacles when he was about to eat cherries, that they might look the bigger and more tempting. In like manner I make the most of my enjoyments, and though I do not cast my cares away, I pack them in as little compass as I can, carry them as conveniently as I can for myself, and never let them annoy others."—ROBERT SOUTHEY.

NOTWITHSTANDING its nautical title, we shall not be afloat throughout the whole of this chapter, but as the best materials for the present biography are Mr Wilson's own letters, and as most of the letters in our possession from 1843 to 1850 were written at sea, we have taken the liberty to include the correspondence of the entire interval under this head.

On the 17th of July 1843, he wrote from Woodville to Sir William Jardine:—

"I have promised Sir Thomas Lauder to take a run as far as the Island of Harris, to aid him in some inquiries regarding the fishing capabilities of those insular shores. Lord Dunmore, who purchased the island some time ago, is to meet us in Glasgow towards the end of this month, and proceed in the *Princess Royal* to his estate, which he scarcely knows. There are a great many lochs in Harris, of which the produce is little known; so when Lauder and his lordship are catching cod, I hope to raise a few trout. I shall be glad to preserve specimens for you, and if there is anything else you wish to direct my attention

to, please let me know. I suppose a little jar with whisky will do for the trouts, but if there is any mode of wrapping up in cloth or otherwise, so as to preserve the scales, you can instruct me. I remember our Sutherland specimens were much damaged; but in my intended trip there will be little or no land-carriage. I think that a small collection of specimens, even of the common burn and loch trout, of what may be called (except St Kilda, where there are no trout) the extreme west of all Scottish countries, may form an interesting addition to your collections."

TO MISS H. WILSON.

"Shooting Lodge (name unknown,
at least unpronounceable),
North-west of Harris,
6th August '43.

"You will be pleased to hear that everything has gone on among us most agreeably, in spite of an occasional angry disputatious wind and sullen sky. I believe that we enjoy our bright sunshine all the more for the contrast, like a diamond 'on the brow of an Ethiopian.'

"We arrived at the south-eastern corner of Harris on the evening of Tuesday, 2d August. The approach on such a calm sweet evening was beautiful, or rather it was wild and romantic, with something of an unrelenting

sternness in the lofty background which bestowed upon it almost a character of magnificence.

"Rodil lies in a little creek, screened by rocky islands. We made our approach in the long-boat, and just as we neared the shore the cutter fired a salute of six guns, and I never saw a finer marine picture than she presented as the engines of 'loud-throated war' threw successively their huge wreaths of pearly smoke over the clear waters, and all the rocky creeks and mountain caverns echoed repeatedly the voice of thunder. 'Dunmore' seemed highly pleased with this piece of nautical attention, although on these almost unpeopled shores there were but few to witness or to welcome the arrival of the great man. The factor himself was from home, but we were warmly welcomed by his wife, a handsome woman of excellent manners. She had a fair-haired pretty daughter, of six or seven years old, not unlike what M—— used to be.

"We explored the old churchyard and the ruins of the cathedral of Rodil, both that evening and during the earlier part of the ensuing day. There are some curious old monuments, with stony knights in armour, and inscriptions which it is difficult to decipher. It appears from a Latin table that the whole building was restored in 1787, and consumed by fire almost immediately thereafter, and then repaired again. For some time after that period it served as the parish church, or at least as the

church of that portion of the parish, and then it fell into gradual disrepair, till most of the roof fell down. It is now of no use except to the starlings, of which great numbers were nestling in the main tower or perching on the remains of the rafters. One of the more modern monuments records that a certain Macleod married his third wife in his seventy-fifth year, and was blessed with nine children before his death, which took place in his ninetieth year.

"The mountains in this northern part of Harris are of great height, and with the bold rocky foreground and the placid sea and their own broken gigantic summits, form a noble landscape in the way of sterile grandeur. The island is said to produce good pasture, and I suppose the numerous little vales, or rather hollows, among the sheltered rocks are clothed with grass; but the general aspect of the whole, as seen from the sea, is as barren as anything unscorched by fire. However, on a calm, sweet summer evening, the hills lying in deep shadow, very dark and solemn—above and between them in the western distance a most gorgeous sky of crimson-coloured gold, broad and rich below, and dying away towards the zenith in fleecy specks of fire upon a ground of most transparent blue—the whole reflected on the bosom of still waters—the scene is one of almost unexampled beauty. The pleasure is probably the greater from the contrast pre-

sented by these aërial effects of a perfectly fine evening, and those of a cold monotonous or misty morning, such as I daresay prevails throughout a lengthened portion of the year.

"Saturday the 5th was wet and blustry. We left the cutter about three o'clock, and met Lord Dunmore and his friend on shore at the head of the loch. We then crossed together the narrow neck of land which separates East from West Tarbet. On the shore of the latter we found his lordship's gig, and a crew of six picked men, all in uniform, with scarlet caps. In an hour and a half they rowed us eight miles westward to where we now are, a snug little sheltered mansion in a creek called Loch Losevagh, with all comforts at command. I have got a wee room, not much bigger than a state-room in a steamer, and a larger one would have been too sudden a transition from my crib on board the cutter."

TO SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, BART.

"Woodville, *6th Nov.* '43.

"I had a pleasant trip to the Western Isles, where, that is in Harris, I found the best sea-trout fishing I had ever anywhere experienced. Sir Thomas Lauder and myself killed 223 pound weight in a very few days, almost all fine fish for sport. There was only one of

seven pounds, another of five, but a vast number of two and three pounds. One party killed twelve deer, with a *quantum suff.* of grouse and ptarmigan.

"I left them soon, having to return home and take my people to Killiecrankie, where the weather was too fine and the water too low for fishing; but where we enjoyed the finest river scenery in the world, so far, at least, as I am acquainted with this terraqueous globe.

"I wish you would turn in your mind something for the Royal Society this season. Owing to poor Forbes's illness and detention in Italy, I anticipate that that learned body will be ill off for scientific business."

Of his six weeks' sojourn in the romantic regions of the Tummel and Garry, he wrote a full account to an old and much-esteemed friend. But even the pen of James Wilson leaves the sylvan wealth of Killiecrankie undescribed. We transcribe the less pictorial portion of his letter:—

TO MRS FLETCHER, LANCRIGG, AMBLESIDE.

"Woodville, 24*th Jan.* 1844.

"Our cottage was placed upon a sloping hill-side, close to the southern entrance to the pass of Killiecrankie, and commanded from its latticed windows a fine sweeping view down the valley of the Tay, towards Dunkeld. We

sat there with devouring eyes almost for a week, without going further. My first walk into the Pass was alone, on a sweet, calm, dewy morning. I was thinking of other days, of the wild cries which had once echoed along that rocky river, and of the bloody Clavers, whose bones lay buried almost beneath my feet; when, on approaching a very solemn pine-shadowed portion of the Pass, I neared a peculiar kind of carriage with an iron grating, and advancing upon it for a close inspection, an enormous Bengal tiger with its burning breath sprung up to meet me. Though fond of natural history, I was somewhat startled by the suddenness of this unexpected salutation. But I had scarcely time to wonder where I was, before a gorgeous group of eight richly harnessed horses, drawing an open carriage, passed before me. Then came a vehicle nearly as high as a steeple—at least so high that I cannot yet conceive how the old umbrageous branches of the overhanging forest permitted it to pass below. Various other carriages, with two, three, or four horses, followed in the wake, till at last the mystery was solved by the fact flashing on me, that Van Amburg and his beasts had been at Inverness, and were now travelling southwards to a more genial clime. But the effect of meeting such a miscellaneous and incongruous group, in the solemn and otherwise silent Pass of Killiecrankie, was singular and rather striking in its way. I doubt not, no other came-

leopard had ever been seen there from the beginning of creation, and, it may be, will never be seen there again, till the end of time.

"We led a secluded, if not a savage life, and had little intercourse with our neighbours, saving the humbler class. Indeed, owing to the great extent of their Highland estates, neighbours, in the ordinary sense, were few and far between. As members of the Free Church, we passed our Sabbath-days almost in a fairy palace; an open, yet sheltered circular space, clothed with the softest turf, and encircled by the slender spray and silver stems of aromatic birches—

'Most beautiful of forest trees,
The lady of the woods.'

The people were attentive, and much impressed—an additional feeling of devotion seeming to have come upon them since the disruption of the old Establishment. The gentry, however, and all the higher classes there, as elsewhere, are hostile to the movement, and shew their hostility by every means, whether active or passive, within their power. It has always appeared to myself, that, even setting aside the awful importance of the subject, it is a strange return for chieftains and heads of families to make, in these days of peace, to the descendants of those faithful followers, who, in the rude contendings of other times, shrunk not from shedding their blood like water

for the glory of the clan. If the sacrifice of life is the duty of the serf in time of war, there is surely a corresponding duty on the part of the chieftain in times of peace, involving a kindly consideration of the wants and wishes of their descendants. I am not much of a Radical, possibly not so much of a Whig as yourself; but I think it is a very grave matter of consideration how far rights of property, as they are called, actually extend, when their strict and tenacious exercise interferes with the wellbeing and the welldoing of a whole community over an extensive district. No doubt, people who feel themselves aggrieved in one country may make their way into another; but suppose that *all* the landed proprietors in Great Britain were to make up their minds among themselves to some restrictive system, what would happen? Of course, the present constitution of society would be rent asunder in consequence of that injustice; and it is but a poor palliation of those who now commit it, that there are some who act in a more Christian spirit.

"We returned here about the second week in October, and have been carrying on much in our usual quiet way. Edinburgh and its society, so far as we happen to be conversant with it, is pretty much as when you left it. My old friend Patrick Robertson is raised to the bench, and looks well and portly in his judicial garments. I dined with him a few weeks ago at Sir William Allan's, the

artist, and found him very cheerful and social, but yet with something of a dignified subduedness of manner, more amusing to myself than his most burlesque humours. Miss Strickland, a literary lady, I believe, of some name, was down in the autumn, and left a favourable impression; and Mrs R—— and her fair daughters are still among us, in great force and high favour."

TO MISS H. WILSON.

"Loch Inver, *Friday evening,*
10*th July* 1846.

"We have been fishing a little since we came here. Both John Lauder and I hooked a good grilse yesterday; but each of us, with our usual humanity, allowed him to escape after a few minutes' play. To-day I killed eighteen fine river trout—that is, fresh-water ones found in the river, but more like lakers. There are a great many salmon in the bay, and in the lower parts of the river, where the pools are too rocky and uproarious to fish with any security. There is also constant netting at the mouth of the river; and, a short way up, there is a cruive which allows nothing to pass through it except when it is opened, from Saturday night to Monday morning.

"We started early this morning. I went up the river two or three miles, leaving John Lauder and Simson Innes at the cruives, below which there is a good salmon

pool. I then fished downwards from the highest point to which I had walked. I wanted to be home early, both to rest myself, and to write by the post which goes to-night; but it is slow walking by a river side. When I was about a mile and a half from Loch Inver, my progress was stopped by a projecting rock, and I had to climb upwards. Instead of a small rocky bank above me, I soon found that there was a great crag; and after getting up a certain way, with my fishing-rod poked and poised before me as best I could, I found myself in a regular fix, being unable to get either up or down. However, I contrived to get to the top at last, without the loss of life or line, although it detained me above an hour, and was very disagreeable. While pursuing my downward way, I saw two snakes* in friendly confabulation, and looking very sweet both at themselves and me. I immediately took off my hat, dashed one of my hands among the grass beneath them, and tossed them both into the air. However, only one fell into my hat, the other making his escape. I immediately put my hat upon my head, and walked home with the serpent on the top of the latter. It did not hotch† so much as you might have expected, but lay very resigned and peaceable.

"On gaining the bay, I found, to my surprise, that there was no *Princess Royal* to be seen. Supposing she had

* They would be slow-worms.

† That is, wriggle about or move uneasily.

been taken outwards to give some stranger a short cruise, I sat down upon a rock by the shore. In about an hour I saw what I thought the cutter coming in, and in good time for dinner; but I soon saw it was another vessel of the same size and rig; and so I sat for nearly another hour. Getting very cold after the previous wading, I made my way towards the bit inn, where I immediately found a letter from Sir Thomas, saying that he had been requested to run the cutter up to Scourie, to bring the Duke and his two sons to Loch Inver to-morrow. He had sent a messenger up the river to bring me down, but he had missed me, probably while I was on the crags. His note was an apology for being obliged to run off for a night, and leave me at the inn. Luckily he sent a small supply of clothing—not quite the things I wanted, but they must suffice. John Lauder and S. Innes had been caught at the cruives in time. So I am alone in an extremely cold house, with no fire at this moment even in the kitchen, as they seem to be giving everything a thorough *redd** for to-morrow. However, I am promised some broiled salmon and cold mutton speedily. All my papers are on board, and my only book—luckily, one of my best—is Clarke's 'Promises,' which I carry in my breast-pocket, and use when I rest myself, by murmuring river or on mountain side."

* Putting in order.

The copy of Clarke "On the Promises" was a miniature edition given to him by Mrs Wilson. It was the *vade-mecum* of all his journeys, and although it was not his custom to pencil his books, some of its texts were marked, such as the following:—

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 15).

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18).

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17).

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. xvii. 15).

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25).

"They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the

throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 15–17).

TO SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, BART.

"WOODVILLE, *Nov.* 3, 1848.

"I am not quite sure but that there may be a meeting of the Board of Fisheries on Wednesday, which I will require to attend. Lord Berriedale and myself were lately appointed a committee to draw up a memorial to Government regarding the recent disasters among the fishing population. The view I took of it was, that we should make out as strong a case as possible as to the necessity of a harbour of refuge, or great breakwater, being erected at the public expense, somewhere on the north-east coast beyond the Cromarty Frith, and nearer the centre of the great fishing rendezvous—the nature of the structure, and its particular locality, to be determined by a marine surveyor or engineer whom the Government should commission to inspect, inquire, and report. I was busy with the documents transmitted to the Board, regarding the disastrous loss of life and property which occurred in August, when I learned that Government,

without solicitation (at least from the Board of Fisheries), had agreed to send down Captain Washington, the Admiralty surveyor, for the very purpose. I therefore made short work with the intended report, and got Lord Berriedale to sign a paragraph or two stating to the Board, that, in Captain Washington's appointment, our object had been attained. Now, if there is to be a meeting of the Board on Wednesday (it is their usual day), I should like to be present, in the event of any report by Captain Washington being to be laid before us."

TO THE REV. JOHN SYM.

"THORNY HOW, GRASMERE, 11*th August* 1849.

"MY DEAR PASTOR,— I was greatly pleased with my trip. I stayed with my entomological friend, Mr Melly, for a week, and received from him and his family every kindness, including a box of beetles of the most *recherché* character, quite new to me, and therefore great acquisitions to my collection. His own is the finest and most orderly I have ever seen. Although I was at it every morning by seven, I could only after all take what I consider as a most cursory glance, leaving innumerable extraordinary forms of insect life altogether unexamined. He supposes himself to have about twenty-nine thousand species of beetles, and as he has both sexes, and occasionally varieties of each kind, you may suppose the amount of

the sum *tottal* of the whole. I went down for a day to Lord Derby's, and was 'awed, delighted, and amazed' by the magnificence of his aviaries, and other natural history collections. Many kinds of birds, such as the sacred ibis of the ancient Egyptians, of which I had before seen only single specimens preserved as great rarities in museums, were running about my feet in half dozens like common poultry, and the Japan peacock, which I was the first to describe and figure some years ago from a stuffed skin in Edinburgh Museum, was moving about in the bright sunshine like a constellation almost too dazzling to look upon. There are twenty men employed in taking care of these creatures, and many travellers are engaged in various quarters of the globe collecting them, so that the expense must be enormous. He wrote me a very civil letter, and requested me to come to the house to see the collection of stuffed birds, which is also one of the finest in the kingdom. The halls, lobbies, corridors, rooms, furniture, paintings, &c., seemed all as they ought to be for an old chap who is said to have about £160,000 a year. I believe Lord Stanley has no particular turn for these sort of things, and so, when he comes to his kingdom, the chances are the aviary, &c., will be dispersed." *

* The magnificent collection of stuffed birds has been presented to the town of Liverpool, and of itself forms a noble museum.

TO THE REV. JOHN SYM.

"THORNY HOW, *Oct.* 2, 1849.

"MY DEAR PASTOR,—I am standing, or trying to stand, in a room with a score of trunks, parcels, packing boxes, and portmanteaus, and have scarcely a place for the sole of my foot. We leave this to-morrow morning. I have almost more to do (as usual with me of little things) than I can overtake, and yet I cannot help, ever and anon, going to door or window, and what pictures are all around us! A gorgeous autumn day, cool, clear, and tranquil, is brightening the 'pastoral melancholy' of the green mountains, while crags, and corries, and the gorgeous woodlands, in light or shade, are—it does not matter what, for you have seen them. I passed a farewell hour yesterday with the great poet of Rydal Mount, certainly the most remarkable man, intellectually considered, alive in Britain. He is now in his eightieth year, and his wife and beloved sister are almost as advanced in years. They have no youthful scions growing up around them to support their feeble steps. It was to me a very affecting thing to witness the great love of these three most aged people for each other—how *fresh* their feelings of affection, as if only now for the first time gushing forth, and unimpaired by what are so often the chilling influences of so long a life. To me this great love seemed beautiful exceedingly,

and is surely among the highest and holiest gifts of God to man."

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

"WOODVILLE, 18*th Jan.* 1850.

"There is nothing going on here but frost and snow. The window *soul* is covered by the bodies of birds, and our outlay in moolins* is enormous. This morning I sallied forth to feed the canaries, with a hatchet in one hand, and a red-hot poker in the other. These weapons were to enable me to break up or perforate the ice. Sometimes it came out *en masse*, in other cases I required to bore a hole, having previously heated a wimble. The canaries usually bathe in the fresh cold water, the first thing they do after the frozen saucer has been melted and re-filled; and this shews surely that their feet are warmer than could have been expected.

"Poor Mrs Chalmers died last night about half-past nine, in peace. I believe that they are an attached family, will dwell together in unity, and derive great comfort and consolation from many sources. When I heard of the death, I could not help turning back to page 291 of the life of her great and good husband, where, in his thirty-second year, and a few weeks before his marriage, he prays, 'O God, pour Thy best blessings on ——. Give her ardent

* Crumbs.

and decided Christianity. May she be the blessing and the joy of all around her! May her light shine while she lives, and when she dies may it prove to be a mere step, a transition in her march to a joyful eternity!' And now (alas for us that it should be so!) their place knows them no longer. If we require to write again, I will let you know how the family continue; but I suppose you will be bending your steps homewards soon."

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

"LAIRG, SUTHERLANDSHIRE,
26th May 1850.

"I presume this is likely to find you at Woodville, after your wanderings over many lands.

"On Thursday morning we started from this on an exploratory voyage to the head of Loch Shin, about twenty miles from Lairg, and all the way by water. We took only one man, known to —— as 'The Professor.' He was for some years a gentleman's servant in the south, and speaks the highest English in the world. Gaelic is his mother tongue, but he won't speak it before us if he can help it; and even then I think he speaks broken Gaelic, as if he had only picked up a few words during a casual 'tower' in the Highlands. But we find him a most handy, obliging person, for he not only rows us all day, but sorts our things in the evening, waits upon

us assiduously at meal-time, and never tires in his attempts to do us good. On the way up we each of us lent a helping hand now and then with one of the oars, and I killed a couple of 'feroxes,' and the lads got some loch-trouts. In a basket there was a little whisky, two bottles of bitter beer, a cold fowl, and a sensible-looking piece of boiled beef; also mustard, pepper, a few knives and forks, a loaf of bread, tea and sugar, and a small pig—of butter. On reaching Creanach, near the top of the loch, about six in the evening, we lay upon our oars, and sent up the Professor to the shepherd's hut to see how the land lay. He soon returned with a toozy-headed tyke of a boy, whom he had seized upon as under-waiter. He reported that the shepherd himself was from home, but that Mrs 'Shepherd' would make us most welcome to whatever accommodation she had, if we would submit to it. So up we sallied, the tyke's head and shoulders being all hung over with bags and fishing-baskets, and the chief-butler carrying the provisions, *plate*, &c. The hut is a lowly, lonely dwelling on the mountain side, not many hundred yards from the water's edge. There is a little farm below it—that is, a few acres reclaimed in some measure from the moorland wilderness around—and a single tree stands in a meadow, and looks very proud and imposing. Stooping our lofty heads, we entered the hut, composed of a but and a ben; that is, of a kitchen kind of place on the left

hand, and a bettersome sort of room with a bed in it on the right. The rough uneven floor was swept and sanded, and a nice peat fire burning, and the smoke going well up a *built* chimney, not common in such dwellings. I went into the kitchen, shook hands with Mrs Shepherd, said I was glad to see her looking so well, and patted the children on the head. The children were decent-looking enough, and although seven in number, none of them, except the youthful valet, appeared to me to be much above three years old. Two, if not three, were twins, and lay in a corner of the kitchen, in the shape of irregular blue bundles, terminated by a pair of pale washy-looking round things, which I was told were their faces, though I can scarcely believe it: one is so apt to be imposed on in this world, as nobody knows so well as yourself. Retiring to the other end of the hut, I found the butler emptying his basket, laying his cloth, putting out his cold fowl and beef—in short, making a regular spread. We had plenty of trouts to fry, and soon set to, and made, you will be happy to hear, a hearty meal. After toasting ourselves for an hour or two by the fireside, we sallied forth to take a cigar 'al fresco,' as we say in Gaelic, leaving the butler and shepherdess to arrange affairs for the night. On returning we found a sumptuous shake-down upon the floor, composed of sacking filled with good dry hay, and covered with both blankets and sheets, and a handsome gray plaid

as a coverlet. I was voted into the single bed, while the two younger members sank deliciously into the broad shake-down, and slept, as I also did, very soundly till the morning.

"Next day I killed two feroxes at the head of the loch, the largest not more than five or six pounds. F—— had on a much larger fish for a considerable time; but although he played well and carefully, and had him on the surface several times, where he shewed a tail-fin like a salmon's, only bigger, the bait came out of his mouth, hooks and all, and he sank with a sullen plunge into the dark profound. This was a great disappointment to every one but himself. I think he must have been a fish from ten to twelve pounds.

"That night we returned to Creanach, ate, drank, *shook-downed,* and slept soundly as before. We arrived here wet and weary on Saturday night. Colonel Hunter Blair and Mr Little Gilmour were kindly waiting dinner for us, which we took at a quarter to nine."

TO MISS H. WILSON.

"Woodville, 24*th July* 1850.

"Here we are all in our frail ordinar', and not much stirring. The shilfas appeared with some young ones a while ago, and fly off with bread and butter to them somewhere among the trees, where we hear them chirping

Once or twice I have seen them with little tufts of tow upon their heads, but they generally keep themselves pretty cunningly concealed. Jackie is well, and impudent, and being much drenched with to-day's wet foliage, has come often into the house, and has once or twice made his way to myself and table, where he arranges my notes, and turns over all the new publications. The young pigeon is getting large and fully fledged, and is spreading out its tail like a peacock. I have ordered out pease instead of corn, and this makes the sparrows very sulky, but is otherwise a saving. The said pigeons all eat out of my hand, and battle with each other between my feet. Jonathan has bedded out a variety of half-grown fuschias and pelargoniums, just coming into flower, in the vacant space on each side of the greenhouse door, which is a great improvement. One likes to see him taking up such little jobs of his own accord.

"On your return you must go in to Millbank,* and see the *Crassula coccineas*, which are each as large as umbrellas, and covered with flower from top to bottom. The garden there is in excellent order throughout, but, like the Granton† one, it is not in *pulling* order, from the want of a large supply of common things. Everything stands by itself, and is a separate thing, as if there was only one of

* The residence of Professor Syme.

† The abode of his brother-in-law, Sir John M'Neill.

it in the world, so that a nosegay is quite out of the question. Our own useful blow of roses, honeysuckle, &c., is coming to an end, although the Chinese and damasks will give us an autumnal show. The gooseberries are ripening fast, and are a larger crop than we have had for several seasons. I shall retard them on your account as much as I can; but they will not keep for ever.

"Jane Wordsworth* pays us a farewell visit to-day. M—— has gone in for her, in spite of showery weather. They will probably take the omnibus homewards at half-past three."

The last of Mr Wilson's fishery voyages was in the autumn of this same 1850. With a constitution not altogether nautical, and with a liability to rheumatic and pulmonary affections which the progress of the years did not diminish, there was considerable self-denial in these expeditions; but his kind and patriotic motive enabled him to set about them cheerily, and with but a slight degree of self-deception he persuaded himself that they were pleasure tours. As usual, he sought to enliven the home he had left behind him by minute descriptive letters, and the copiousness of such logs, often written in weariness and amidst many difficulties, is very characteristic of his tender and considerate nature. His old friend, Sir T. D. Lauder, was

* The poet's grand-daughter.

gone; but in the new Secretary of the Board, the Hon. Bouverie F. Primrose, he had still an agreeable and intelligent fellow-voyager.

TO MISS H. WILSON.

"Fraserburgh Bay, 14*th Sept.* 1850.

"We consumed some hours at Peterhead, examining the harbour, and visiting a fishing-station of Lord Aberdeen's, called Boddam. Some of the stations we had seen the day before were very curious. At one of them, called Dunies, I had climbed up the cliff to the little village above, where the people were assembled to look down upon us, probably expecting we should be wrecked in the boat while entering their craggy creek. After gaining the high land I made my way by a narrow ledge towards a cliff commanding a good sea view. In going along, I noticed a bundle of rags and a bonnet near it, lying a foot or two down the ledge, and just about to hang over the precipice. As the rags moved a little, I stepped down a bit, stretched out my arm, and found myself the parent of a living child. Clapping the bonnet on its head, I hauled it back towards the houses, where it was soon seized and shaken by its grandmother, who never knew it had been out, but who, I think, would never have seen it alive again if I had not chanced to pass along the ledge from which it had rolled.

"We passed most of yesterday (Friday) on shore at

Fraserburgh, calling on the curers, and afterwards got a land conveyance to take us to St Colm, Cairnburg, and Inverallochy, all stations much in need of piers or little harbours, there being frequent loss of life from want of such convenience. We have taken careful notes of the number of boats and men, and of the general character of the coast, that we may afterwards report to the powers that be, if any public grants of money are made, and their distribution left to the Board, as was recently the case with the £6000 given to Lybster. I wish my 'public duties' had admitted of my using my rod, as there is a good stream for sea-trout close to Fraserburgh, to fish which I chanced to obtain leave some years ago from Mr Gordon of Cairnburg.

"We lie very snug in the bay here. I am writing you a line before breakfast, Mr Primrose having gone ashore this morning (Saturday) for an hour or two to see some people whom we missed yesterday. He is very active. We get sooner to bed than in Sir Thomas Lauder's time, and this is better for us in the morning. After breakfasting, we shall explore the stations on the south side of the Moray Frith, probably taking the boat along shore, and, when the day is down, cut across to Cromarty, where we shall rest during the Sabbath."

TO MISS H. WILSON.

"H.M.S. 'DASHER,' BAY OF CROMARTY,
Thursday Morning, 19*th Sept.* 1850.

. . . . "Getting on board to dinner by half-past six on Saturday, we made such way as we could to Cromarty Bay for the night; but were overtaken by so thick a mist that we could not see the light-houses for our guidance, and so had to slow our engines and proceed by soundings. When proceeding rather fast at one time, those on the look-out heard fearful howlings in the mist, and soon after a boat was seen just under our bows. A few seconds more would have run her down; but the engine was stopped in time, and the boat was picked up. There were a couple of *hands* on board, and a passenger, whom they had been trying to take across the Moray Frith from Cromarty to Nairn, when the mist came on and they lost their reckoning, and they were going with wind and waves they knew not where. They had left the northern shore about seven in the evening, and it was about one in the morning when we picked them up. The passenger was half dead with cold and mist; but rallied rapidly on being regaled in the gun-room. We did not see him ourselves, as it was dark when they were lugged on deck, and they were dropped again off shore by day-light. We got into Cromarty Bay in the course of the night—at least, I

found myself there when I rose and looked around me on the Sabbath morning.

"I have here a curious kind of association with Thorny How, which I find arises from my having written a chapter of some kind or other about Cromarty, while there in 1842, for 'The Voyage.' We went ashore on Sunday soon after breakfast, Mr Primrose volunteering to go with me to the Free Church. But, on making inquiry, we found there was Gaelic only in the mornings; so we went, in the first place, to the Established Church, and to the Free in the afternoon. The latter has a very large congregation; in which, however, I was sorry to find there had recently been a split—a minority, who were not 'edified' by the person called, having swarmed off and built a churchlet of their own.

"On making my way from the church to the *Dasher*, who should I meet but Hugh Miller, who sidled up, and stood talking on one leg till I was obliged to go on board. He has discovered some peculiar fossil beast among the crags lately, and was looking wonderfully fresh and hearty. I should have liked a few hours' stroll with him hereabouts very much; but we have too many things on hand at this advanced season, and—duty before pleasure.

"On Monday morning, the 16th, we had to retrace our course almost as far as Banff, where we had left off our explorations on Saturday evening. (I may mention that

the *Dasher* is again under weigh, and her engines thumping the table like a bull. This is the chief disadvantage of a steamer compared with the *Princess Royal;* the tremulous motion makes it very difficult to write.) We carefully inspected Whitehills, Portsoy, Sandend, Port Knockie, Findochtie, Port Essie, Buckie, Port Gordon, Speymouth, Lossiemouth, Hopman, and Burghead. This took us two days. On the Tuesday morning we went ashore at Buckie, chiefly to see the Free Church clergyman, Mr Shanks, who takes a great interest in the fishing population, and has been extremely useful to them in every way. Unfortunately, he was from home, and a good many miles off; so we could only leave our cards. His old housekeeper was like to cry, and implored us to come back in the afternoon, as Mr Shanks would be so much disappointed at missing 'the Government.' I suppose she took us for Lord John Russell and Sir George Grey at the very least. We find the man-of-war in the offing, and the cut of the boat's crew when we land, have a great and beneficial effect. The coast-guard men are always on the look-out when we go ashore, and aid us in every way.

"We were about ten hours each of these days in an open boat, without meat or drink, under a broiling sun, ever and anon jumping on jetties, jabbering to men, women, and children, who gather and gape around us,

evidently thinking that we are the wonderful wild beasts, and not themselves. Then we have to climb up sand-banks and rocky steeps, to visit the villages perched upon their tops, and from which we obtain a good bird's-eye view of the rocky creeks below. The 'pursuit of herrings under difficulties' is really wonderful; and I feel every day more and more convinced that a few thousand pounds of public money could not be better bestowed than in aiding these poor and industrious, though occasionally wild and wayward people to overcome the natural disadvantages of their situation.

"On Wednesday we examined the breakwater at Nairn —a work of the Board's. To get on it was by no means easy. It consists of a lengthened pile of stones projecting into the sea, and cased or boarded over with wood. We thought there would be steps up it of some kind, but there were not; so, after reaching it in the boat, we had to climb up by putting our claws and the points of our toes into any little openings we could find here and there between the timbers. It was rather difficult, but we got up at last; and had we fallen backwards into the sea, the boat, which was hanging on as well as ourselves, could easily have picked us up. Talking of picking up—I am glad we were of some use to a fellow-creature about this time. Just as we were leaving the *Dasher*, and our gig was alongside, we saw a pilot boat, with three hands in it,

approaching a schooner which was making for Nairn harbour, off which the *Dasher* had heaved-to. By some accident the main-boom of the schooner struck the mast of the pilot-boat, and upset her, throwing the three men into the water. Two of them caught a rope thrown from the schooner, and got into her; but the third drifted away with the boat, of the keel of which he contrived to get hold. But his position was most precarious; and had our gig not instantly shot out like an arrow, there is no doubt he would have been drowned. They were just in time to get hold of him. They were unable to right the boat, but took the exhausted man to the schooner, and then carried us to our breakwater."

TO MISS H. WILSON.

"H.M.S. Dasher, Scrabster Roads, Thurso,
Thursday Morning, 26th Sept. 1850.

"On Monday we made a good run to Wick. Foreseeing that business might detain us there possibly for more than a day, we started off a man to Thurso to pick up our letters and papers there. With these he returned to us at Wick early on Tuesday morning, after walking to and fro his forty miles and upwards. M——'s notes are a great treat, and last an enormous time. I take them out constantly when I have nothing else to do, and find a new

meaning in almost every word. Several little enigmas remain, and not a few delicious little bits that I would not decipher for the world. They read just as distinctly when turned upside down as any other way, and this is a great advantage at sea in stormy weather. Indeed, I am convinced we could never have got through the Pentland Frith without them. I shall have a *spell* at them again as soon as I can, and am determined never to give up the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties.

"On Tuesday the 24th we took the *Dasher* out of Wick Bay, and, running southwards a bit, landed and inspected various stations, such as Dunbeath, Lybster, and Latheron-wheel. Lybster is the place for which we got a government grant of £6000, for deepening the harbour and extending the pier, so that boats may run in even at low water. They are getting on with their excavations, and all concerned seem to regard the grant as an immense boon. Nobody who has not examined the dreadful barrier of rocky precipice which forms almost the entire coast along this eastern shore, can conceive the danger which boats run when seeking their little creeks with the wind on shore. On the 19th of August two years ago, more than a hundred men were drowned, and many thousand pounds of property in nets and boats destroyed, in consequence of a sudden storm along the Caithness shore. Such disasters can never be altogether prevented, but

there is no doubt that a low-water pier and place of shelter in some central place will be the means of saving life.

"Yesterday the secretary had a good deal to do on shore, and the wind not suiting for an exploration of the creeks by boating, I made up my mind to trust myself to a land gig, under the guidance of a fishing officer, and drive ten or twelve miles along the southern coast, so as to complete the exploration of the previous day. In this way I carefully examined Occumster, Clyth, and Whallingoe. The latter is the most extraordinary little harbour of refuge I ever saw. It is nothing more than a horrible chasm between two dreadful precipices, ending in-shore in another precipice. But on one side a sort of zig-zag pathway has been cut out of the rock, and leads down to a natural ledge supporting a kind of rough causeway, which they call a pier. Who *they* are I can scarcely say, for, on looking down into the dark abyss, all I saw was the heaving water and a few sea-gulls gliding over it far below me. They were silvery bright in the sunshine, but seemed to suffer a ghostly eclipse when they circled within the shadow of the jaws of death. Leaving the fishing officer in his gig, and perched quite as near the edge of the precipice as suited either him or his horse, I made my own way downwards by the zig-zag staircase. The whole thing is very curious and striking, both as a work of art and a piece of

natural grandeur. There were no boats in, but, on descending to the lowest ledge, I found a forlorn old gray-headed man, of a very wizard-like aspect, sitting among a few herring barrels. A sort of twilight gloom pervades the place even at noon-day. You look upwards between two enormous precipices to a strip of sky, the contrast of colours being marked and peculiar. The deep green sea is at your feet, then upwards a depth of darkness, till the eye catches the sunshine on the overhanging crags of one side, the other being as black as pitch, and then above all the bright blue sky seen as if from the bottom of a dungeon from whence there could be no escape. However, I did escape, though with a heaving chest, as I toiled my upward way, lying down sometimes on my hands and knees, both to rest exhausted nature and to enjoy a peep over the rocky ledges at those extraordinary prison walls."

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

"KYLE SKU, IN SUTHERLAND,
Saturday, 28th Sept. 1850.

"I shall take it for granted that you have by this time returned from Billholm, and are now once more at Woodville. You have no idea what trouble my friends and I have had with your letters—how we have turned them upside down, and read them from the other side, holding

them up to the candle. In the latter way your sentiments really became quite transparent. However, there are some little tid-bits of which the meaning is more than doubtful still, though I am very sure that they have a meaning both broad and deep.

"On Thursday afternoon we went ashore at Thurso, and passed the evening with Sir George Sinclair and his family at Thurso Castle. It is a nice, rather peculiar, oddish-fashioned place, close upon the sea-beach, quite treeless and unadorned, but pleasant though not picturesque in fine weather, the Bay of Thurso looking like a lake when the tide is in, and bringing the great sea-waters close up under the windows. Sir George is extremely kind and devoted to the poor and sick of the neighbourhood. A carriage came for us from the inn at a pretty early hour, as we had to drive round the bay to what is called Scrabster Roads, where the steamers lay at anchor. We had previously packed up all our traps, and shipped them to the *Lucifer*, having taken leave of Captain Parks. This we did with regret, for he has been in every way most kind, obliging, and attentive. He is a very pleasant-looking person, quick and active.

"The *Lucifer* is a much larger and more commodious vessel, with a beautiful cabin as big as a small drawing-room, finished off with solid mahogany doors, and excellent state-rooms. She is commanded by a very gentle-

manly young officer of the name of Jackson, a nephew of Mr White Melville.

"We left Scrabster Roads yesterday morning at an early hour, steamed all along the southern coast of Sutherland with a fresh wind and a favourable tide, both sea and sky in great spirits, everything being so bright and beautiful, from the sparkling spray below to the embattled clouds above. So on we drove at a great rate, myself standing chiefly on the paddle-box, and shewing off greatly by naming all the headlands as we passed along, to the great astonishment of the southern sailors, all of whom, except a pilot, were new to the northern regions. I dared not enter Loch Eribol to call on C—— M——, who has shooting quarters and may still be there; but after rounding Cape Wrath we hugged the land for the sake of smooth water, slipt along sweetly, and in good time ran up to Kyle Sku, where we cast anchor, dined, lay all night, and are now as snug as junipers.

"It was at this place that the *Princess Royal* ran her nose against the side of a hill in 1841, as duly recorded in Wilson's 'Voyage.' Having been beat in my upward passage on that occasion, I was the more anxious to complete my exploration now, so to-day (Saturday) we took a four-oared gig and started immediately after breakfast. This narrow land-locked water where we now lie branches off at its upper extremity into two distinct lochs, called

Glen Coul and Glen Dhu. We ascended the former, which at its upper end is called Loch Beg. The scenery is savage,—hard, sterile, rocky mountains all around, with deep valleys between filled up by the waters of a somewhat sullen sea. We landed at the far-inland head of Loch Beg, and after walking about a mile among craggy mounds, peat hags, mosses, and monstrous stones lying in most admired disorder here and there, we came to a greener flat, a kind of 'blind tarn,' encompassed on all sides by barren mountains. But from a great, gray, broken, precipitous front of one of these, without either bank or birch-tree, but sheer over the mountain side, there rolls a fine far-sounding cataract, which breaks among projecting ledges into a thousand silvery streams. It is one of the loftiest falls I ever saw, and gives a grand finish to that rock-surrounded vale. By the by, while sitting on a stone and pretending to be one, while ashore this morning, a fine golden eagle flew over my head. He never saw me, but soon perceiving Mr Primrose and Captain Jackson somewhat in advance, he soared suddenly upwards, took two or three grand wheels just over the cataract, and then disappeared.

"I have already mentioned that the *Lucifer* is a much finer and more commodious vessel than the *Dasher*. She has fifty-three hands on board, besides the commander and his officers, surgeon, &c. The only thing I miss here,

compared with the *Dasher*, is the trumpeter, who played 'God Save the Queen' and 'Rule Britannia' every morning at eight and every evening at six. This sounded sweet upon the wild and lonesome waters. I have nearly worn the front of my hat off with returning salutes. I can't go ashore for a minute to look at the smallest piece of fish-guts and return again without the marines on deck grounding arms, and sundry other salutations being gone through. If some little barefoot opens the door to me when I get back, I shall see a difference. Still home is home, though not upon the deep."

"KYLE SKU, *Sunday.*

"By way of a variety, we had a good deal of thunder and lightning during the night, some very heavy showers both of rain and hail, with the wind howling so loud that I am sure it must have a sore throat by this time. The weather is still very gusty, and we shall probably not leave the ship, both because it is windy and the day is Sunday. We have just had morning prayers read by the captain, the whole ship's company being assembled between decks, the men in very trim attire, having been previously mustered in divisions, and inspected on deck, the officers all in full fig, with their gold-laced caps and epaulettes. The service was very interesting, and the Liturgy puts it in the power of a commander to keep holy the Sabbath-

day more effectively than could be done in our way, without an officiating minister. We are now settled again in the cabin quietly at our books, of which there are several very good ones on board, and so I shall not set a bad example by any longer continuing my Sunday log. I hope we may be able to cut across to Stornoway to-morrow; but the strong south-west wind which still prevails, and the consequent sea upon the Minch, may very possibly debar our running out."

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

"OBAN, *Friday, Oct.* 4, 1850.

"We lay very snugly at Kyle Sku for a couple of days. While writing there in the cabin we had a heavy fall of rain and hail, which almost darkened our daylights; and it was a curious coincidence that, in turning over some papers in my desk during that portentous interval, I fell upon an unanswered note from Professor Airy, the Astronomer Royal, in which, respecting his progress through Sutherland, he says, 'In crossing from Kyle Sku to Loch Inver we had a storm of wind and rain far surpassing in its kind anything that I had ever seen.'

"After a quiet Sunday night we left Kyle Sku early on Monday, and made a successful run to Stornoway. Amongst other estates, Mr Matheson, who lately returned from the east, has bought this great island of Lews,

about sixty miles long, and containing seventeen thousand tenants, great and small. The kindness and hospitality of both Mr and Mrs Matheson are overflowing, if not unexampled. When we called, they would not hear of our not dining and spending the remainder of the day with them; and when they heard that Mr Primrose and I had to visit a fishing station near the Butt, or north end of the island, they insisted on our bringing our things ashore with us at dinner-time, that we might sleep all night at the castle, and start more comfortably next morning. Meanwhile, Mr Matheson arranged that the factor should accompany us to the station in question, which we afterwards found to be an immense advantage, as he knew all the places, and could speak all the languages of the Lews.

"The castle is a very imposing pile, built just above the village or town of Stornoway, and, when viewed from the sea, seeming to overrule it in a very lordly way. It occupies the exact site of Seaforth Lodge, the more humble dwelling of the now extinct chiefs of the clan Mackenzie, who bore the title of Lord Seaforth. You walk under an arched portico, leading into a handsome entrance-hall, and this hall is continued almost all through the interior of the castle, from end to end, in the form of a lengthened and lofty corridor, from one side of which branch off the various public rooms. We were led from

one middle-sized drawing-room, very handsomely furnished, into another smaller one, a kind of snuggery or parlour, where we found Mr Matheson at a desk-table writing, and his wife not far off with a book in her hand.

"We got back to the castle at half-past seven, the dinner hour, and found that a number of people had been assembled to meet us. Most of them must have been summoned since two o'clock of that same day. Then we had Lord Campbell, the Chief-Justice of England, and his daughter, and Mr Scarlett, a son of Lord Abinger. These were staying at the castle. I was next Lord Campbell when the ladies retired, and found him very pleasant and courteous. He was so obliging as to praise the 'Voyage,' and said he had just been reading, with great interest, the account of St Kilda. Meanwhile, the piper in full array was blowing his very life out in the corridor. He was asked ere long into the room, and entered in tremendous puff playing 'The Campbells are coming,' which was thought very clever and appropriate, chiefly, I suppose, because the said Campbells were just going away.

"On the morning of Tuesday the 1st of October, we were down stairs soon after six, found all kinds of tea and coffee, breads and venison chops, ready for us hot and hot; and in a very few minutes after we had set to,

under the auspices of the factor, Mr Matheson appeared to see that all was right. He accompanied us to the portico, where we embarked in a handsome double-seated dog-cart with a couple of gallant grays, driven by the factor, a little groom accompanying us to take care of the beasts during our inspections. I heard Mr Matheson at breakfast time desiring the butler to fill the sandwich box, and put it with some old sherry in the dog-cart. This was very right!

"We started, and drove for several hours over, it must be confessed, a most bleak and barren country, not a tree to be seen, neither rock nor mountain—nothing but black moorland, with here and there some long thin grass whistling in the wind, or a forlorn patch of oats or barley seeking a precarious existence from the spongy soil. Even the blooming heather, which elsewhere so often throws its purple splendour over the mountain wilderness, seems dry and shrivelled. But on nearing the northern extremity of the island, we came upon a good deal of improved land, and there is no doubt Mr M. will ere long effect a considerable change. Most of the huts are like the ancient St Kilda ones, or worse; but he is rebuilding many of them, and forcing the people to be comfortable. After driving about twenty miles over the wilderness, we came to a snug farm-house with stacks of hay and corn, enclosures of turnips and potatoes, and fields of grass and clover. We here took

the farmer's ponies, leaving our own couple to recover from the process of perspiration, and drove seven or eight miles further on, crossing the base of the Butt, and visiting Calligol and other fishing creeks and stations. The people scarcely speak English, so without the factor we should have made little and unproductive progress. I may mention, as a proof of the rarity of shrubs here, that the people never cut the *dockens*, but let them grow as tall as possible. You see them everywhere, like little brown poplars among the stubble, after the plots of barley have been shorn. At a certain time they pull them up, twist them about in some way, and eventually make them into baskets to carry bait, &c., to the fishing. It was when we were lunching on venison sandwiches, and taking them out of a beautiful basket with a flap over it, all made of beautifully plaited cane-work, that the factor overheard one of the lookers-on say in Gaelic, 'Eh, what grand dockens they mun hae in their country!' We got back to the farm-house about four. There we found our horses at their hay and corn, and we had not sat two minutes in a neat parlour, with a table-cloth ready laid, and white as snow, when in came a large tureen of sumptuous barley-broth, two large dishes of potatoes, a beautiful little leg of roasted mutton, a neat plate of sliced cold beef, and two fowls nicely roasted. These we immediately consumed, took one turn of whisky-toddy, ordered our gallant grays, shook hands with the

farmer and his wife, and departed, having still some rocky havens to explore before dark. In fact, the sun had actually set before we reached the last one, and it was rather disagreeable, and not a little dangerous, to be crawling over slimy dulse and tangle, among tremendous big stones, with pools of clear sea-water between them, pretending in the twilight to be only sand. The most 'disgusting' part of it, as you would say, was passing from one rock to another over a fresh-water run, by means of a narrow plank not quite firm at one end, and really not broader than this note paper. I had to put my feet across it, walk sideways inch by inch, and was very nearly down once or twice before I was over. However, we all did it at last, both going and returning. It was nearly pitch dark, as it had become very cloudy, before we got back to the highway, where we had left the carriage, and where a couple of nice bright lamps had in the meantime been lighted. There was a large village at this place, the houses being much fuller than usual in consequence of groups of people returning from the communion and the after preaching. We looked into one or two of the houses, which were filled with smoke and wild precarious-looking people, with dingy complexions and tangled locks. We could scarcely see them, except that now and then an arm and shoulder were protruded through the dim atmosphere, and plunged into a large trough full of potatoes standing near

the fire, a large, deep, red, flameless peat one, placed in the middle of the floor. The room was rather spacious, and by degrees you could make out various forms of men, women, and children in the dingy distance. They are said to be very kind to each other, and certainly on this occasion the supply of potatoes seemed ample. They had been emptied from the boiler into a large trough, into which the children of the mist ever and anon extended their tarry paws. At one time, I found somebody poking me between the side and arm, and on turning round I found it was only a cow wanting its accustomed share of the peat-fire, and to attain this object it was very gently boring me with its left horn. Several other cows, I afterwards found, by treading on their tails and toes, were lying about the room, there being here no invidious distinction between the housing of man and beast.

"About nine at night we came to a kind of farm-house, near a lonely creek by the sea-shore, called Dalbeg, and there we turned in. The gudewife made a thousand apologies for want of preparation, but she soon produced tea, trouts, honey, biscuits, scones, and oat-cakes. These we despatched. On looking out, the sky seemed on fire, as if the sun had come back again with a blue eye, after kicking up a row in the west country. It was the aurora in great magnificence. I went out for half an hour to enjoy it and a cigar, and then returning, Mr P—— and I

mounted a little staircase, entered a little bed-room with a large fire, and two neat little box beds, very white and clean. Into them we turned and fell asleep. In the middle of the night I gave the board between me and Mr P——'s head a violent kick, making him roar out, 'Halloo! what's that?' I said nothing, as it could not be *me*, though it might have been my heels; and next morning, when I asked him if he had heard a very curious noise in the night-time, he said, No, and that he had never slept sounder in his life.

"We left Dalbeg at six in the morning of Wednesday (Oct. 2d), and took a stage to Loch Roag before breakfast. We there fared sumptuously, and starting again over a wild country full of lochs, reached Stornoway at noon. As had been agreed, a four-oared boat was waiting for us; the commander was on the look-out; and Mr Matheson came down to the quay to bid us good-bye. We had posted nearly eighty miles since the preceding morning, had been fed and housed, and had nothing to pay for anything. It is a good country *yon* to travel in. Just as we were taking our departure, Mrs Matheson sent us a haunch of venison, four brace of grouse, and as many vegetables as will serve ourselves and the ship's company, about fifty in number, for several days."

Of this year the record may be fitly closed by the following letter to his young friend, Miss Taylor:—

"WOODVILLE, 22*d October* 1850.

"I am glad now that you did not pay us a visit last summer, because by this time it would have been over, and you might have found it so tiresome as to have never renewed it, and so we would have parted perhaps for ever —a thought too mournful to be indulged in during a melancholy autumn-day, when all I see before me is a jackdaw moping over some withered leaves. But next summer is still to come. I shall be another year down hill, you another year up. The woods of Killiecrankie will probably be much the same as they have been for several seasons, nature being rather a renewable kind of thing, in spite of floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes. By the by, a friend of mine was passing through Killiecrankie several months ago, on the top of Her Majesty's mail, when an enormous beech-tree, which had been long declining from the hill-side, gave way in a moment, and came down upon the road head-foremost with such a crash as had not been heard in that country for a thousand years. It took several woodmen several hours to clear a path for man and beast; and there is now a piece of bright blue sky looking down upon the brightened verdure of a mossy glade, where formerly the roe-deer might have screened themselves alike

from summer's heat and winter's snow. Now, suppose you had actually come to Scotland last summer, and that your mother had been sketching that very tree at that very moment, the consequences are more easily imagined than described. So let us be thankful for the past, and look forward hopefully to the future.

"The meeting of the British Association came on and went off as usual, and occupied our time and thoughts so far. I believe it was a good meeting. At all events the weather was splendid, and kept the philosophers, who sometimes lose their tempers like weaker people, in great good humour; and there were lots of dinners going, good and bad. I was delighted to see my old friend Sir John Richardson looking so well. Professor Airy was going to Sutherland; so I gave him an unpublished map for his guidance, and such personal directions as I considered useful. When his tour was ended, he wrote to me from Inverness, with thanks for my map and information—adding, that three things had greatly struck him in that northern country: 1st, the extraordinary kindness of the people; 2dly, the wildness and majesty of the scenery, 'elsewhere unequalled;' 3dly, 'the *ferocity* of the weather;' and then he describes the water-spouts and storms of hail which beset him and his wife as they proceeded in their dog-cart over the wilderness."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Last Summers and Winters.

"O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of Heaven,
O how canst thou renounce and hope to be forgiven!"

BEATTIE.

"While other men's minds seemed closing up, his (Mr Roberts's, the biographer of Hannah More) day by day unclosed to the charming details of natural history. Very appropriately might the words of Leighton, often quoted by him, be applied to his enjoyments of the objects of creation, that 'seeing and tasting God in them, he had a supernatural delight in natural things.'"

At an early period of his life Mr Wilson felt depressed by the want of a vocation. He had quitted the writer's office without any intention of following out the law; and, with broken health, and no profession, it almost looked as if existence would pass idly and ingloriously away. But, by cultivating those tastes and affinities with which the Author of his being had endowed him, he soon created a calling for himself. So ample and so practical was his acquaintance with all departments of natural history, and so notorious were his obligingness and courtesy, that he was resorted to by young and old of his countrymen in quest of information; whilst, like Broderip and Buckland, the fascination of his picturesque and sprightly pen attracted multitudes of readers, who cared nothing for zoology, and who (as he himself would have said) could scarcely distinguish a bee from a bison. The consequence was that, as already mentioned, his occupations increased from year to year; and, probably, no period was so busy or so happy as that closing lustrum of which we are now to give some account. Much of his time was generously

devoted to questions of great economical importance, such as the artificial breeding of salmon, and the encouragement and right regulation of the cod and herring fisheries. When vacancies occurred in Scottish professorships of natural science, he was involved in extensive correspondence, both as the friend of so many men of science, and as one in whose judgment and impartiality the patrons had confidence; and the business of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, superadded to the duties of his eldership, and attendance on sundry committees, often left him scant leisure for those literary engagements which multiplied upon him as one of the most popular expounders of a popular science.

Of his winter work and summer recreations some hints will be found in the following extracts from his correspondence:—

TO MISS TAYLOR.

"Woodville, Edinburgh, 18*th June* 1851.

"I had great pleasure in hearing of you t'other day, through your note to Marianne, which was kindly sent, with other domestic despatches, to Luib, in the central Highlands of Perthshire, about seven miles beyond Killin. My brother the Professor had been unwell throughout the spring; and having been advised a change of air, he refused to take it unless a family party was made to

accompany him. So Henrietta and myself, and his daughter, Mrs Sheriff Gordon, agreed to go. He afterwards wrote to his daughter, Mrs Ferrier, and her husband, to both his sons, and to Mr Glassford Bell and his daughter; and so the small select family swelled into a much larger one than was expected. We went by Glasgow, and then steamed up Loch Lomond to a station at the head of that loch called Inverarnan; from whence, by Glen Falloch, we drove through a grand wild Highland country, some fourteen miles, to Luib, on the banks of the Dochart. The absurd part of it was, and for a time worse than absurd, that the Professor's carpet-bag, containing all his clothes, all his money, and all his fishing-tackle, had been taken out of the railway van by mistake somewhere between Edinburgh and Glasgow; so the first night in Glasgow was one of discontent. We telegraphed for the bag in vain next morning—there was no word of it. The Professor was with difficulty persuaded to go with us as far as the head of Loch Lomond, Sheriff Bell offering to go that length and return with him to Glasgow. This they did; and the bag being eventually recovered, my brother joined us at Luib in a day or two. But for a time I was in the heart of the Highlands, apparently for no purpose, having left home at some inconvenience to myself for the sake of another person, that person, meanwhile, not being one of the party at all. We had broken

weather on the whole, and one or two cold and stormy days which covered all the summits of the great mountains with snow, and accorded well enough with the desolate grandeur of the district, but scarcely suited perambulation on the part of the ladies, or even of elderly gentlemen, like certain of the party. However, the thing went off well. There was some enjoyment out of doors, and a good deal of idle fun and cheerfulness within. We found char in Loch Dochart of which I was not previously aware. Caught lots of trout, and a couple of salmon weighing about forty-five pounds the two. Either of them would have pulled a Westmoreland angler into the water—

'Poor is the triumph o'er the timid parr.'

Henrietta and I walked one day down to Killin and back, and explored the beauties, which are great and manifold, of the head of Loch Tay. We returned as we went, *via* Loch Lomond, &c. I think my brother better on the whole; but when in town he scarcely ever leaves the house, and this confinement is bad for him. There are several suburban places close at hand in the occupation of members of his own family, where he would be welcome; but he will not move. Your men of genius are not always reasonable creatures in their everyday doings; and there would be little harm in this, if they would allow them-

selves to be guided by the weaker vessels. But they are often very obstinate in their perversities, and won't 'take a bidding.' I should apologise for boring you with all this; but one naturally writes about what is uppermost in mind.

"The Rev. Edward Jefferies leaves Grasmere for Sweden and Norway early in July. There is a kind of Scandinavian fever in the country this year, in spite of the glittering splendours of the Crystal Palace. At least, a good many people whom I know are going to the far North. Professor Forbes was with me yesterday, wishing me to start with him in a few days to Hull, and from thence by steam-packet to Christiania. The coast scenery, at all events, is now very accessible, as a Norwegian steamer goes close along shore every week or two from Christiansand as far north as Hammerfest, near the North Cape, where one may see the sun at midnight. The funny thing is, that in that country you will not see the sun at all in the day-time for a while, as the eclipse is total there. This is what takes a good many of our philosophers away from their wives and families; but Professor Forbes is desirous also to extend his knowledge of the ice-world, already great, by exploring the Scandinavian glaciers, and the grooves upon the surface of the rocks. Asthma and increase of years, laziness, rheumatism, and decrease of cash, debar my going so far from home;

although I confess I still cherish the hope of finding myself screened from the 'garish eye of night' within the sombre shadows of a northern fiord."

Like all the world he went to London in the summer of 1851, and enjoyed it all the more that it was a sight-seeing visit, complicated by no business. To his quiet observant eye there was in London a boundless treat; but in lieu of his own record, which on this occasion was very brief, we may give the following reminiscences which have been kindly communicated by his ardent admirer and quondam fellow-townsman, Adam White, Esq. :—

"Whenever Mr Wilson came to town he called on me. After Museum hours, I met him, and we had two or three rare runs between the hours of four and ten. On one occasion, when he was staying at Craven Street Hotel, I dined with him, and then took the boat from Hungerford Stairs to Greenwich. He was a delightful companion; but for a time he listened to me as I pointed out one object after another, from distant Lambeth with its Lollard tower, and old Lambeth Church, with Tradescant's tomb, dear to naturalists, in its churchyard, to the Temple Gardens, and the crowded city churches, Romaine's among the rest, not very conspicuous as we sail under Blackfriars' Bridge, and Barham's, whose facetious fun and sparkling

equivoque in 'Ingoldsby' were well known to the brother of Christopher North; on past the Tower, with its gray oyster-plastered bastions, and through the Pool with its mazy life of ships, down to Greenwich with its noble hospital and still more noble park. He was a delightful talker. This evening his subjects were, Dunrobin Castle and the Duchess; trout and salmon-fishing in Sutherland with Dr Greville, J. P. Selby, and Sir William Jardine, three Christian gentlemen like himself, and amongst his oldest and staunchest friends; and Doctors Neill and Fleming, and the Edinburgh naturalists. We got on the subject of James Hogg and William Wordsworth, and I lamented that Christopher North had never written Hogg's biography, for it was advertised. Great man as Wordsworth was, *he* did not believe in biography—a striking proof this of his originality. Shakspeare and Milton, and many other great men, are known by the biography breathing in their works. Wordsworth wished no other memorial, and, excepting Paxton Hood's enthusiastic tribute, and the unsatisfying volumes of his nephew, it would seem as if the poet were only to be made known by his works. But from Mr Wilson's remarks, I could see that he was disappointed that the brother bard, who used to live at Elleray, and who was the first to praise in *Blackwood* and in all companies Wordsworth's poetry, at a time when Jeffrey and other critics were doing their best to run it down,

had not been asked to write the life of the Rydalian laureate.

"Another ramble was to Highgate and Hampstead. Much delighted was he to see Mr Gillman's house, now occupied by that good surgeon and kind man, Mr Brendon. He viewed with interest the scenes where Coleridge used to meditate and pour out the treasures of his gifted mind —the library, with its shelves now removed—the room where he usually received visitors, on one day Sir Humphrey Davy, on another Basil Montagu, or Edward Irving and Thomas Chalmers, perhaps Thomas Carlyle—the beautifully sloping garden, with its northern wall one mass of flowering shrubs, and where might be heard the nightingales as they sang in the trees near Ken Wood. With all this he was delighted, and I remember how he never deposited in the passage that unfailing stick, but took it with him from room to room. We left, and crossed the fields to Hampstead—those fields where John Linnell, the Poussin of our day, used to study, when Blake used to visit him thirty years ago; and after a view of Harrow from the Heath, we were glad to get home to Kentish Town in time for a hearty dinner-tea.

"One other excursion I remember, when we went into the City, first visiting most of Dr Johnson's resorts. His staircase in the Temple then stood, and we went into 'The Mitre' and got a glass of ale, sitting in the identical angu-

lar recess, so cribbed and small, where he and Boswell enjoyed their talk eighty years ago or more. Each court of interest in Fleet Street we visited, including that one (Crane Court) where, in Sir Isaac's days, the Royal Society met, and where the Scottish Corporation now transacts its business. We looked into the narrow lane nearly opposite Newgate, where Goldsmith wrote the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' glanced at the scene of the Cock Lane ghost, and stood where the martyrs suffered near St Bartholomew's. We finished off our peregrinations by a visit to the curious courts and involved streets among which, almost buried, stands the old Dutch Church in Austin Friars, with its Gothic windows, sunk porch, and sun-dial, and its churchyard, where we found flourishing a fig-tree and limes, that looked fresh and delightful amidst the bricks and dust of London. No wonder that Charles Lamb loved London. Who loves it not that knows it?

"He had a pleasant face, and an eye of extreme humour, though gentle withal. Although remarkably alive to the ridiculous, or rather to the funny aspect of things and occurrences, he was the reverse of cynical. His kindness was a natural gift, welling through the glasses of his golden spectacles evermore, attracting good-will and disarming controversy; and every one came in for a share. Among the last times I saw him was at his lodging in Bloomsbury Street, as he and his niece were starting for

the terminus in Euston Square. The servant handed something into the cab: he had already given her a little present of money; and he now shook hands with her, saying, 'Good-bye, Mary. I thank you much for your kind attention.' That was so natural to the man. His rule was, 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you;' and from his Master he had learned to be meek, and to condescend to those of low estate."

To the London journey of the "Exhibition year" reference is made in the commencement of the following letter:—

TO MISS TAYLOR.

"Woodville, 22*d August* 1851.

"What a multitude of foreigners there were in London! You who have the gift of tongues might have been well and usefully employed; but it was alarming work with others less gifted to be attacked on all sides, in palaces and picture-galleries, gardens and omnibusses, by people of unknown speech, 'dwellers in Mesopotamia,' and I know not where. But we were greatly delighted with our visit, which, however, was far too short for anything but the most superficial survey. I am glad you liked the Professor's picture by Watson Gordon. I think it is excellent; but there was a still better hanging near it, the

portrait of a strong-featured, silvery-headed old man, one Dr Wardlaw, of Glasgow, by a west-country artist of the name of Macnee. I thought it the best portrait in the Academy Exhibition. I am happy to say that (like yourself) her most gracious Majesty the Queen was attracted by the Professor's picture; and a person, who necessarily knew, informed me that, on leaving the Academy one day, she said, 'I must just have one other look at my dear old man.' The said old man, I regret to say, does not seem to be gaining strength with the advance of the season; and, I confess, I am somewhat apprehensive of the effect which the anxiety and fatigue connected with the labours of his class may produce next winter. Meanwhile, he is in the south of Scotland with his eldest son, who has a farm and pleasant habitation by the banks of the Esk, some nine miles from Langholm, in the Border country.

"By the by, I am not *answering* your letter at all. I never do answer letters, and hope this will be an additional reason for your writing them. I think somebody mentioned that Derwent Coleridge had been down in Westmoreland, and was staying for a time at the Knab. He seems to have taken a long time to think about it—having, if I remember rightly, been some fifteen years without seeing his poor brother. But perhaps he knew, or at least believed, his case to be hopeless. I have not

myself seen the said Derwent for more than *forty* years, so I daresay there would not be much reminiscence between us. Yet I remember the last day I saw him as distinctly as I do yesterday. He was standing before the kitchen fire at Elleray, with bare feet upon a sandy floor, and holding a pair of wet worsted stockings close upon the grate, the said stockings sending up a cloud of steam, which he called performing a chemical experiment. I thought these words very fine, though I scarcely knew what they meant. Poor Hartley meanwhile went mouthing about, swinging his arms to and fro, and muttering to himself I know not what, but certainly quite unconscious whether his stockings were wet or dry.

"You expected, from what you heard, to be disappointed in Wordsworth's 'Life.' I suppose it is a hard thing for a man who is not himself a poet to write the life of one who is; that is, if his doing so involved the necessity of his unfolding the inner life of one whose soul was 'like a star that dwelt apart.' Yet I think there is no harm in our having a connected narrative of the ordinary ongoings of the poet's life, by a kindly disposed relative, who had access to an accurate knowledge of dates, localities, and other minor matters of detail. I expected nothing more than this, did not in fact desire anything more, and so have not been disappointed. The most curious thing about the book is, that it makes no mention whatever of the only critical

essays on the poems of Wordsworth which were influential on the public mind, of any value in themselves, or of any service to the poet. If the biographer neither knew where to find the current literature which bore upon the poet's works, or how to refer to it when found, then, as the Americans say, *he ought to.* It is curious, too, that not satisfied with knowing that the name of Wordsworth is now one of the most illustrious in our country, and must continue so till English is an unknown tongue, he goes into all the drivel about the ancestry, and the old wooden *Press.* It was interesting enough to hear the old man himself talk even of such things as these, knowing, as we did, how he at other times communed with nature, and forgot his ancestors; but how a highly-educated gentleman like the nephew, brought up in rather a high position from his youth, and now occupying an influential and honourable station, and with a just appreciation of the now immortal memory of his great kinsman, should have troubled himself with so much twaddle, is incomprehensible. I would as soon have expected a party of noble sportsmen, pursuing the king of beasts, 'the armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcean tiger,' to have turned aside to disinter a mole. The conclusion I draw from the importance attached to this affair of the *Filius filii filii* is, that in reality the Wordsworths *never had any ancestors.* But let them now take care of themselves for a hundred

years or two, and then look back, and they will see a name of which they may well be proud.

"I partly agree in what you say as to your personal acquaintance with the poet not having deepened your realisation of the poet's mind. I had always great pleasure from my own personal intercourse with him, but it was not on account of his personal attributes, or even for the sake of any intellectual excellence *then* exhibited, but because I knew him to be the medium through which his Creator had willed that so many pure and elevating thoughts should be conveyed to the minds of meaner mortals by his writings. I think him a transcendent poet, not of the very highest class (Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, Milton, he may not sit with), yet altogether unequalled in our day and generation; but as regards general intellectual energy and power, force of character, range of knowledge, and other attributes which raise one man above another, I have known many his superiors. I daresay he lived too much alone for the cultivation or increase of those more discursive (I mean conversational) faculties to which I have referred, and with no one 'near the throne;' and it is a bad thing, intellectually as well as otherwise, for any man to have everything his own way. On the other hand, we owe the rich treasures which he has left behind mainly to the contemplations of his solitude, and should be thankful for the same. There is no doubt that he was a great

proser. It is equally certain, and more consolatory, that he was likewise a great poet."

Towards the end of autumn he took a little trip to the Trossachs, having for his fellow-traveller his dear relative and pastor, the Rev. John Sym.

"31*st October* 1851.

"On leaving Stirling, and turning our faces towards the mountains, our prospects were fearful in the extreme. We found plenty of droskies at the station, and got into one instanter, giving the word, 'To Callander.' The rain soon came down like a deluge, and we could see nothing before us but a miserable 'drookit' driver, and a few yards of miry road, and on either side disconsolate hedges and damp rheumatic-looking turnips. We rubbed the panes now and then with our handkerchiefs, tried to look out at a pea-stack occasionally, and even got up a hollow, horrid sort of laugh at times, as if rejoicing in our dreadful doom. At Callander we changed horse and carriage, waiting only long enough for me to leave a hazel stick (from Ambleside) in the parlour window. By four o'clock, when we got to the Trossachs' Inn, although there were violent gusts of cold sleety rain and wind, the air was much clearer. Ben Venue looked very imposing, with mists and showers passing rapidly along, and now and

then a kind of ghastly gleam, that those who did not know better might have taken for sunshine.

"The new inn is a most extraordinary concern, more like a penitentiary, or place of punishment for evil-doers, than one of entertainment for either man or beast. It consists chiefly of turrets, and you are ushered into a little circular cell, with several windows pierced in different directions, but each window like a slit in Bridewell, being only a single narrow pane in breadth, and three panes in height. When you sit in the middle of your cell you actually see nothing but your prison walls, and three or four narrow streaks of light. However, when you rise, and put your face quite into one of the windows, the effect is rather striking, especially that from the western slit. You have, as it were, set in a dark framework, a view of a finely broken portion of the Trossachs, a small gleaming portion of Loch Achray, and almost the whole of Ben Venue, with its great rocks, rugged pastures, and gloomy hollows.

"Soon after four the rain ceased altogether, and having ordered dinner, we sallied out for an hour and a half, and had a very grand though gloomy view of our old walk through the Trossachs. The woods were in fine autumnal order, and almost glowing, though unilluminated by any western splendour. I think the sun must have gone over

to America that afternoon by some other road, for stepping westward

'seemed to me
A very drizzly destiny.'

"Next morning, under a brilliant sunshine, the autumnal glories of the woods came out in full force. Crags and lichen-covered rocks, and rich moist patches of mossy verdure, scarcely seen through the umbrageous screen of summer, were now distinctly visible through the clear amber-coloured foliage of the birch trees, which contrasted well with the russet oak and the darker green of the pines and hollies. Ben Venue was in all his glory, magnificently lighted up, yet deeply contrasted in light and shade, every projecting crag having its long dark shadow stretching westwards, and many cavernous hollows being still in deepest gloom; while at every step the birches were waving their golden tresses, or showering down leafy honours that emblazoned the very earth we trod on. There is no such path in California nor the Bathurst Mountains, for such is invisible to those whose greedy restless eye is searching for earthly gold.

". . . . When we came to the open space of flattish ground, odorous with *Myrica gale*, which we had to cross occasionally on our homeward way as a nearer cut to the Macfarlanes', we made our adventurous way to the banks

of the river, which was both rolling rapidly and roaring fiercely. We then made our way up the river-side, and as we best could over the wooded knolls to the boat-house. This we achieved diligently though slowly, as the ground was often rough and the heather high. We passed several beautiful little waterfalls, and though sometimes sprawling like a pair of wild cats, and up to the eyes in ferns and bushes, we ever and anon came to some grassy platform with sheltering rock or sylvan screen, and gazed around upon the mingled majesty by which we were encompassed. Though the distance is very short, this circumambulation of every little creek and bay took us several hours. Bright as was the sunshine, several heavy showers, both of snow and rain, passed down the ravine between us and Ben Venue. We ensconced ourselves once or twice in peaty hollows among the heather when we thought the gloom was gathering, but, with exception of a little peppering now and then of dry hail that jumped just like 'sweeties,' we escaped entirely.

"Next morning (Thursday) was more beautiful than ever, with the additional advantage of being calm and still. There was just a gentle breathing in the woods, and a slight ripple on the waters, which, however, were bright and blue from the almost unclouded brilliancy of the heavens above. It was our last day, but as we did not require to be in Stirling till after half-past five, we had

plenty of time for another walk. Having yesterday diverged from the road, we this morning took the usual path to the loch, and then proceeded onwards as before to the lofty platform station, where we gazed enamoured till the mid-day sun was at its height. Retracing our steps, though loath to go, we ascended the Penitentiary, packed up our bundle, paid our bill, and made our way to Stirling. For the sake of the view we were each stage in an uncovered conveyance, and during the last hour felt monstrous cold; so much so, that we could at last only faintly articulate, 'There's Stirling,' and on getting to the station, instead of running up the battlements to see the sun set, as did Jess of Dunblane, we ensconced ourselves near the fire of the refreshment room, ordered hot coffee and sandwiches, and were soon far cosier than kings."

TO ADAM WHITE, ESQ.

"WOODVILLE, 28*th April* 1852.

"Since I wrote to you last I have been not seldom ashamed, I shall not exactly say of forgetfulness or procrastination, but of *inefficiency*. I looked through old Izaak soon after hearing from you, and was as usual delighted with his fine, old-fashioned, rambling way of according his piscatorial excursions. But one can scarcely regard it now-a-days as a practical work, and to make it

so by annotations would require the notes to be more voluminous than the work itself. I thought at one time of indicating certain inaccuracies and contradictions in his natural history statements; but, besides that you are so much more competent to do this yourself than I am, I find there is a recent edition of Walton by Rennie, in which a good many things of that kind are noted. I have, therefore, been nonplussed what to do. Any biographical illustration of the old worthies enumerated would be in good hands if in yours, from your retentive memory, and ready access to all books. All I can now hope to do, if not already too late, is to answer any queries you may be inclined to put. I have Rennie's edition by me, and a cheap one (Thomas Johnson, Manchester, 1851), and should like much if I could serve your views; but really the practice of a Scotch angler is so entirely discordant from that of 'England in the olden time' that they cannot be reconciled.

"I have been a good deal occupied this winter by the Royal Society (of Edinburgh) matters in consequence of Professor Forbes's absence, and my having been called upon (a sad substitute!) to act for him as secretary. I was a little anxious occasionally when there were few papers in expectancy, but on the whole we have got through the session wonderfully well, and I am now arranging the papers and transmitting them to the

printers, with a view to the formation of a *Fasciculus* of the Transactions. I have also had a good deal to do for the Board of Fisheries, and took the latter and Mr Secretary Primrose down as far as Ballantrae in March, to examine the great spawning ground for herring there. It is, so far as I know, the only ascertained bank resorted to by herrings for the purpose of procreation, and the Board has been petitioned to stop the spring fishery there as destructive to the spawn as well as parent fish. But it is an awkward thing to interfere with the sustenance of a poor population, especially when drawn from the sea, which calls no man master. However, I have laid the case before the Board in a report on its various bearings. In these, and unfortunately many other matters, I am one of the 'great unpaid.' Of literary work on my own account, I have done little or nothing since I saw you. A few weeks ago, Professor Fraser, the editor of the *North British Review*, came down in a dilemma regarding a very long and elaborate article on Dr Chalmers's life, including the forthcoming volume, by Isaac Taylor, which had been promised in time for his May number. Meanwhile, poor Taylor had lost a daughter, and his being able to finish his essay in time became doubtful. So Fraser came to me to see if I would run up a natural history article of any kind as a stop-gap, and I set to and got through with an ornithological concern, taking Gould's

birds of Australia for one portion, and poor Thomson's birds of Ireland for another. I am happy to say, however, that Isaac Taylor's article came in time after all; so my poor, though well-intentioned, substitute will not be required till August. It is well, however, that it is now written and out of hand.

"Have you been as yet turning over your summer plans? If you can give us a few days here at any time it will afford us great pleasure, and you might find something in my ill-arranged, and now seldom looked at, collection to interest you. I have not forgotten my promise as to specimens of char and *Salmo ferox*. They are both here, and I hope to get an artist *en route* to the Academy Exhibition to take them up to the British Museum.

"You would see that my brother John had resigned his chair. We all thought it the safest course, as intellectual labour fatigued him, and retarded his recovery. Now that he has nothing to do but take care of himself, I hope he will mend. He has the advantage of being with my brother Robert at Woodburn, a fine, large, airy dwelling near Dalkeith, and walks about a good deal every day. My nephew (James Ferrier, the late professor's son-in-law), who has for several years filled with great acceptance the moral philosophy chair in St Andrews, is a candidate for the vacant chair in Edinburgh. Dr M'Cosh of Belfast, the author of a very excellent book of

a more spiritual kind than is usual in metaphysics, is also a candidate. I cannot but wish him well, as I am sure he would do justice to the chair; but 'blood is thicker than water,' and as my nephew is regarded by Sir William Hamilton, and other leaders in mental philosophy, as one of the most distinguished metaphysicians produced in these days, I don't think we shall be taking the wrong sow by the ear in doing what we can to serve him."

In June 1853, he was called to give evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, as to the probable effect which the supplying of Glasgow with water from Loch Lubnaig would exert on the salmon-fishing of the rivers into which its waters are discharged. From this examination he came out with highest honours, and, as he himself alleged, with the degree of "senior (wr)angler."

TO MISS TAYLOR.

"CRAVEN HOTEL, STRAND,
4th June 1853.

"MY DEAR CHILD,—I hope you have more time to read letters than I have to write them. The former process is sometimes a more arduous task than the latter. Witness the caligraphy of my beloved ——. How her pen slides away like a shrimp in the sand, leaving lines scarcely less legible. When I hear from her, I satisfy my

conscience by holding the letter to my heart, and taking it for granted all is right; but as to any continuous or distinct decipherment, that is out of the question.

"I am here to instruct the senators of mighty England on the mysteries of salmon legislation, and on the water-gauges of the Teith and Leny and Loch Lubnaig. What a fine thing it is to have been a good wader in early life! Angus seemed much amused by my grave and assiduous attention to business, a brief return to the forlorn hope of my youth! Alas, alas! when I look back, what is there but a trackless waste? Truly I have been an unprofitable servant, and now the night cometh when no man can work. A blighted spring makes a barren autumn; though it is but little that the most diligent can do, and the one thing needful is the sure foundation of the Rock of Ages. 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out!' Lord, ever give us that bread!

"It was pleasant for me to find the M'Neills in London. I shall dine with them this evening, having hitherto kept almost aloof from want of leisure, or rather from the desire to give my leisure to the Exhibition. What an extraordinary picture Millais' 'Release' is! As to the mere handiwork or manipulation, I have scarcely seen anything like it either in ancient or modern art; and then the sentiment is so simply and solemnly expressed, without any of that over-acting or show of grief, so common with

artists of a lower kind, however clever. Landseer, to my mind, is not effective this year. I was much struck by a single simple head, a youthful Samuel,—'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' The artist's name is Sant. In my ignorance, I had never heard of him; but that head shews a beautiful combination of almost infantile simplicity and sweetness, with an expression of reverential awe, as in the presence of the great God who made heaven and earth, which to my mind is very striking.

"I have just received a note from His Grace of Argyll, wishing me to be with him this evening. He is a great admirer of Mrs Stowe, and in reply to some remarks of mine, says, 'As to Mrs Stowe, nothing will spoil *her*, I feel sure.' Good Mrs Harriet! she was almost worried to death in Edinburgh, and must have thought us rather a ruffianly set of philanthropists. For myself, I am too old now to become a philanthropist, and I have a great aversion to crowds; moreover, I set such great store by the feminine part of the female character, that I am slow to see the use or propriety of any woman appearing upon a public platform, unless, as in the case of the late Mrs Manning, she is going to be hanged. It then becomes unavoidable."

Towards the end of that year, the editor of this volume projected a serial for young men, which afterwards ap-

peared and was completed under the name of 'Excelsior.' For aid in the zoological department he applied to Mr Wilson, who responded with characteristic kindness. He prepared a series of lively little monographs on parrots, humming-birds, and pigeons; and editorial perplexities would be greatly diminished if all contributors were equally considerate and magnanimous. Although no man was better entitled to insist on the inviolable integrity and immediate insertion of his articles, he submitted to delays, divisions, and retrenchments, which would have roused the ire of less practised authorship; and from the recollections of those days, and our experience with not a few kindred spirits, we would strongly advise the conductors of similar undertakings to seek for allies men of established fame, and who are not haunted by a constant feeling as if their rights or dignity were in danger.

TO THE REV. JAMES HAMILTON, D.D.

"WOODVILLE, EDINBURGH, 23*d August* 1853.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I had recently the pleasure to receive your letter of the 16th. It had gone astray for a day or two in consequence of '*near* Edinburgh' being on it. The Post-office people think that near means a good bit off, and so send notes thus addressed to Woodville, *Colinton*. Being within the Post-office delivery, we are regarded by

the officials as forming an actual part of the Modern Athens.

"It is not easy to resist your explanatory appeal, not that I have any desire to resist it, but the reverse. At the same time, I am not very free just at this time to undertake new things till I have made further progress in others to which I stand previously pledged. I have a great number of 'heavy wet,' yet sufficiently *dry*, articles to revise for the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. I would rather write them anew, but the publishers are desirous to preserve and take advantage of the old materials as far as they can be made properly available. I am therefore treating them as gently as I can (one is apt to overlook the faults of their own offspring), and shall satisfy myself by adding a supplement now and then. I have just done so to the article *Animalcule*, and having approached the subject from the *Ehrenbergian* or zoological side, I have viewed many tribes as *animals* which the modern botanists claim as *plants*. I must see what is thought of the vexed question by Robert Brown, with whom I am to dine to-day at Dr Greville's. But to keep to your points of inquiry. Without pledging myself to very regular or very frequent contributions, I have no objection to say that I shall do my best to send you a short article now and then. I suppose (and hope) that you mean them to be anonymous. There would be no objection, of course, to a

published list of pledged contributors if the publisher advise such; but I hate to see my own name, having been (under the *alias* of *James Wilson*) frequently transported, and more than once actually executed. Even if my knowledge and capacity admitted of my taking a prominently useful part, I would feel some delicacy in doing so in any new undertaking, seeing that of late years I have declined, at least not acceded to, applications from Mr Lockhart (for the *Quarterly Review*), and from the Blackwoodians. I won't dwell upon this, because I really feel that editors labour under a misconception in requesting my aid. If they had it oftener, they would ask it seldomer. *Experientia docet.* I have sent articles to the *North British* now and then, partly from the impulse of the Free Church spirit, partly because, as a near neighbour and old friend of Professor Fraser, I am within the vortex. A stream must carry straws as well as logs."

TO THE SAME.

"Woodville, *5th October* 1853.

"My dear Sir,—I was favoured with yours of the 1st in due course. I hope to be able to send you something in time. I have been maundering so much of late about the 'Birds of Britain,' that I think they should be allowed to fold their wings for a time. The 'Birds of the Bible'

may be kept in mind, although the want of Hebrew might be a difficulty if one wished to be critically correct. I doubt not the subject has been already rushed into by some who know nothing either of dead languages or live birds: at least a good deal of what I thought inaccurate has met my eye in glancing over the so-called Scripture natural histories. The late Dr Scott of Corstorphine (afterwards, I think, Professor of Hebrew in St Andrews,) left a number of unpublished essays of that sort behind him. He was a good Eastern scholar, but didn't know a bullfinch from a black-cock.

"I think the easiest plan for myself, and one of the most suitable for you, would be for me to take up now and then a single definite group, say, for example, parrots (*Psittacidæ*), or humming-birds (*Trochilidæ*), and give a sketch of the nature, extent, and distribution of the group. It would have the advantage that each such contribution, supposing it correctly treated, would be complete in itself —a satisfactory circumstance alike to writer and reader."

TO THE SAME.

"WOODVILLE, 30*th January* 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR,—On coming down stairs to breakfast this morning for the first time *this year*, I have the pleasure to receive your note and the *vera effigies* of the least

of all humming-birds. It seems quite correct. I am glad you are inclined to deal gently with me as concerns the *Trochilidæ*, in the matter of time. I have for several weeks, with the exception of a rolling tide from the Royal Society which I could not resist without being swept away, been unable to do anything, or at least have left undone whatever was not altogether imperative and *unpostponable*. On Saturday forenoon I had an application from Professor Fraser to know 'what progress I was making' with an article on Professor Forbes's book on Norway for the *North British Review*. I had to give a most lame account of my proceedings, Dr Greville having borrowed the book, and the article itself being not even ruminated upon during (what to me of late have often been) the sleepless watches of the night. Mr Fraser wishes the said article by the first of March. I doubt if I can do it at all. But I must undertake nothing else till I at least try."

TO HIS DAUGHTER AND NIECE.

"Princess Royal, Campbelltown,
Monday, 11*th Sept.* 1854.

"My dearest Children,—I wrote a few hurried lines from hence on Saturday, I think; but really, on board one does not always know whether head or heels are uppermost, and the days of the week or month are of small account.

"I told you it was funny at Port Logan to see the tame cods, head and shoulders. A large pond has been quarried out of the rock at the head of a narrow creek. The sea-water rushes up the creek every tide, and falls away from it at ebb-tide; but the excavation being below high-water mark, eight or ten feet in depth of fine sea-water is always left within it. There is a cottage and an old woman alongside. She descended with us down a flight of steps to the side of the pond, with a basin of limpets and sand-eels in her hand. The moment the cod-fish saw her, they flocked to her feet, raised their great heads above water, opened their enormous mouths, laid their heads over each other's shoulders, and wambled about like a set of puppy dogs. I took the basin and fed them. The moment one of them found a sand-eel in its mouth, it gave a great plunge, seeming unable to swallow till it got its head under water. One of them became very much attached to me, and I think would fain have gone on board the cutter with me. I never saw such a set of lazy, good-natured fellows as these fish in my life. They are as happy as the day is long, but, of course, are picked out now and then and carried to the kitchen.

"Went to the Free Church yesterday and had a good discourse from a Mr M'Neill, originally from Isla; a large and respectable congregation. Read our good books all

the afternoon. P—— thinks Jukes on the 'Types' not very clear. I have forgot or neglected to bring Dr Gordon with me. I took up 'Cruden' &c. to my bed-room, intending (having a handful) to go down for other things; but I was much hurried at last, in consequence of staying too long in town on the day of my departure, and having no one to help me. I must not be left to myself again."

When, on the death of the venerable Professor Jameson, the chair of Natural History was conferred on Mr Edward Forbes, no one rejoiced more heartily than Mr Wilson in the return to Edinburgh University of its gifted alumnus; and the acqaintance then resumed, in the course of one short summer, ripened into a warm and affectionate friendship. In the alacrity with which he aided the new professor in the arrangement of the Museum, and in the ardour with which he shared the general impulse given to the cause of the natural sciences, by the accession of a cultivator so distinguished, it almost looked as if Mr Wilson's own youth were renewed. But all the projects and hopes of which Forbes was the mainspring, were doomed to a sudden and overwhelming collapse. The session had scarcely opened, when a feeling of mingled grief and consternation spread through every circle where the import of such tidings could be understood, in the announcement that Edward Forbes was gone. To Mr

Wilson, the public calamity had all the additional bitterness of a personal bereavement.*

TO SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, BART.

"WOODVILLE, 20*th Nov.* 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—We have been often thinking of you and yours, and I was about to write to you on things in general, when I have been altogether astounded and overthrown by the disastrous death of Professor Edward Forbes, which took place yesterday morning, after a short though severe illness. I know not when the funeral may be, but I know how deeply you will sympathise in this great and irremediable bereavement. If you think of coming to town, I hope you will take up your quarters here. We shall not be from home, but let us know by a line or two."

The vacant chair was offered to Mr Wilson himself. With his singularly comprehensive knowledge of the various departments of zoology, and surrounded by the respect and good-will of all his fellow-labourers in Scotland, no appointment could have been more natural, or

* Professor Jameson died April 17, 1854, in the eightieth year of his age, and after occupying the chair of Natural History for half a century. Professor Edward Forbes died on the 18th of November 1854, at the age of forty.

more honourable to those who made it. But he declined it, for reasons which he thus communicates to Sir W. Jardine, in a letter dated 12th December:—

"I may tell you privately, in case of erroneous rumours reaching you, that, from mistaken notions of two or three of my own friends, who chance to have it in their power to give the chair, regarding myself and capabilities, I was asked 'to stand,' and assured that if I did so, the government influence could be gained and the election secured. They were ignorant of my constitution both of mind and body, and of the now irremediable habits of half a century. My fittest as well as most familiar place is by the fireside, and there I shall remain, grateful to God for His goodness in making it cheerful from time to time. If I knew either a great deal more, or a great deal less, I would have no difficulty; because in the one case, I would feel that I was *fit* for the chair, in the other case, I would not feel that I was *unfit* for it. In regard to others, I told you at the time, I was not to be a partisan, but wished a fair field and no favour to the worthiest beyond their worth."

The death of Professor Forbes was followed by a loss still more personal and afflicting. For years Mr Wilson had rejoiced in the society as well as the ministry of his relative, the Rev. John Sym. With an intellect wonderfully

clear, orderly, and vigorous, Mr Sym combined the deep and reverential piety and the exquisite taste, which, to devout and intelligent hearers, rendered his discourses singularly attractive; whilst his bright and manly bearing was the true interpreter of a soul generous, noble, and loyal in a rare degree. To Mr Wilson, his able and affectionate pulpit instructions had been a source of much enjoyment and spiritual benefit; and on the frequent companionship of a friend so congenial and comparatively youthful, he naturally reckoned as a chief solace of his own advancing years. But Infinite Wisdom had otherwise ordained, and in mid-time of his days, the active, faithful minister ceased from his labours.

TO SIR WILLIAM JARDINE, BART.

"WOODVILLE, 31*st Jan.* 1855.

"MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—We have just had a sore distress in the sudden death of our faithful pastor and near relative, the Rev. John Sym—a person to whom we were all greatly attached, and whose loss to us is in many ways irremediable. He leaves a widow and seven young children. He and his family passed yesterday week with us here. He had a slight inflammatory cold on the ensuing day, which subsided or was subdued towards the end of the week. But on Saturday some feverish symptoms

supervened. In a single night he sank to rise no more, dying on Sunday forenoon, our Communion Sabbath, to the inexpressible grief of all who knew him. We consign him to-morrow to the narrow house. My niece H—— has been with Mrs Sym ever since her husband's death, and with the exception of sleeping here, I have passed most of my time with the bereaved family in George Square, lending a hand as I best can towards the required arrangements. Of course, other things must go on and be attended to, in spite of private griefs ; and the best thing for all of us, under all circumstances, is occupation. I hope in another day or two, though it may be with a heavy heart, to proceed with whatever I may have in hand, or may be called upon to do ; and I therefore desire you to understand that this calamity, which is really great, need make no difference in your plans as regards coming here. Next week I understand you to be looked for, and we shall expect you to come to us, with any of your family whom it suits to bear you company. Of course, our usually quiet home will, under the circumstances, be even quieter than usual ; but I know you have generally quite enough of occupation of your own to prevent time hanging heavy, and you will kindly excuse our own depression, which we shall do our utmost to subdue."

In attending Mr Sym's funeral, Mr Wilson caught a

heavy cold, and was himself laid aside for nearly two months. On recovering, he wrote the following letter to Mrs Sym :—

"WOODVILLE, 22*d March* 1855.

"MY DEAR MRS SYM,—I need scarcely say how frequently I have been thinking of yourself and your dear children, during my indisposition ; and regretting, among other effects of my illness, that it should have so long debarred me from seeing you and them. I am now, however, quite better, and trust to a renewal of that intercourse from which, for many a year, I have derived such unalloyed enjoyment. Alas ! it cannot be, in one of its features, what it once was ; but it is very consolatory for me to think, that during our long and intimate acquaintance, not a shadow of a cloud has ever interposed between your husband's friendship and my own. I may surely say, that 'while dead, he yet speaketh,' for I fondly dwell on much of our intercourse, which related not to the things of earth, but now forms a portion of those golden links which lead our thoughts to heaven.

"He knew in whom to trust, and he had also the blessed privilege of being able to shew to others the way that leadeth to eternal life. Blessed are they who die in the Lord, and may our end be like *his*. The thing that has happened is hard to be realised, and I sometimes think

I dream, more especially as my own illness has, in some measure, prevented my seeing with my bodily eye the grievous blank, however sorely I may feel it. I pray God, who gives and takes away, that all of us, yourself more especially, as the great sufferer, may be consoled and supported. Let us look also to the blessings which remain, and I need scarcely assure you how anxious all of us here will ever be to minister to your comfort, and to the well-being of your children.—I am yours affectionately," &c.

TO THE REV. J. HAMILTON, D.D.

"LESKETH HOW, AMBLESIDE, *9th April* 1855.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have frequently had you in mind of late from the feeling of an unanswered note being somewhere in my possession. My niece Henrietta replied to it *pro tempore*. I had a prolonged and severe illness during winter and early spring, and although greatly better for some little time, I continue to feel the act or attitude of writing very irksome, and indeed painful if prolonged more than a minute or two. Even in this respect I am now better, and hope to be soon fit for some kind of work. I have a good deal before me in consequence of winter arrears.

"We have come up here for change of air, and to avoid the Edinburgh east winds. We are with old friends,

and very kind ones, Dr and Mrs Davy ; and Mrs Fletcher, the mother of the latter, my *oldest* friend, now in her eighty-sixth year, lives close at hand.

"Your note to Henrietta has been received since we came here. I was really just about writing to say how I remembered that your request related rather to engravers' work than anything quite immediate from myself. I think *pigeons* were formerly named among us. If you care to take them first, I was going to suggest that a gigantic foreign species, well known but remarkable in size and structure, called the Goura, or crown pigeon, might be selected as illustrative. It is engraved in many books, and exists in most collections. I cannot refer specially to any good representation of it, but Adam White could shew it you at once in the British Museum. Or if you like to take the turtle dove, *Columba turtur* (the one which visits England), or the laughing turtle-dove, *Col. risoria* (the eastern one), or any other species, it will be the same thing to me.

"Since I sat down to this (and my hand is tired already) I have heard read out with deep regret, from the *Witness*, the death of your dear mother, and so I almost feel inclined to apologise for intruding. But I know you will be glad to hear from me, and I was myself desirous to write, more willing indeed than able. I am, however, in every respect greatly better, and I hope I am sufficiently

grateful for all the care and kindness bestowed upon me during my illness, and for the goodness and mercy which have followed me all the days of my life.—I am, sincerely and sympathisingly yours," &c.

TO SIR W. JARDINE, BART.

"Board of Fisheries, Edinburgh,
31*st July* 1855.

"I found so many interruptions at home lately, from strawberry-feeders and flower-pulling parties, that I have been taking refuge here in a large room, with a more commodious and less crowded table than my own, where I can expatiate on some fishing points, on which I am pressed for 'copy.' I have also ready access to some documents which I could scarcely carry home. I forget if I mentioned to you that my old friend Adam Black had got both himself and me into a scrape, in consequence of some misapprehension about the article 'Fisheries' for the 'Encyclopædia.' He thought I had promised to do it, and when asked if it was ready, all I could say was that I had never even heard that it was expected. Whose memory was in fault nobody can tell, but I have been endeavouring to remedy the mistake, by whomsoever made, by working rather closer than I wished to do during this flowery and fruity season.

"But what I send a line for just now is to say that I wish you would give an hour now and then to the parr question; that is, ascertain whether a great preponderance of the larger ones in the river at this time are males. A man in England writes me that he can reconcile the adverse theories of one and two year old smolts, by the fact that all the female parr 'smolt' soon after the completion of the first year, the males not till after the close of the second. I remember being often struck by the precocity of the male autumnal parr, and by the scarcity or undeveloped condition of the females. If they are all off to the sea-bathing some months before, of course we can scarcely expect to find them in fresh water."

TO ADAM WHITE, ESQ.

"WOODVILLE, 14*th December* 1855.

"Can you give me any precise information as to the literary history of our Arthur Seat butterfly, *Pol. Artaxerxes?* All its transformations have been now made out, but a friend of mine asks me where it was first described. Fabricius mentions the only specimen of his day as being in the cabinet of Mr Jones of Chelsea, who also seems to have published and given a figure of it. Who was this Mr Jones of Chelsea, and where are his figure and description to be found? I remember, before you were born,

catching it with Dr Leach, and continuing to send him specimens to London from time to time; but I forget if he ever published any original or other description of it. It is entered in Samouelle's 'Compendium,' 1819. I don't know what Donovan says, my copy being borrowed."

TO MISS TAYLOR.

"Woodville, 3*d Dec.* 1855.

". . . . There is certainly a great want of continuity as well as efficiency in anything I have tried to do since I came last home, and I almost fear I am too old to mend. However, I suppose that I should at least make the attempt. To a certain extent I have been lately doing so, while visiting with our new clergyman such of our congregation as reside in the southern districts, which have been assigned to my supervision. Many changes have taken place among our people. Of many, the places now know them no more for ever, seeming to say, 'Be ye also ready.' Alas! how often has that been said aforetime, and with how little effect! May the grace of God be so vouchsafed that while speaking to others, I be not myself a castaway!

"I sometimes feel, especially while indulging in the dreamy remembrances of Westmoreland, that what Ruskin calls 'the duty of delight' is the only one I ever perform.

At least I perform it so much more easily and pleasantly than any other, that I am not seldom doubtful as to how far it may be classed among the *meritorious* duties in any way. I fear it may be viewed as a question of casuistry, as may many actions which a person performs, and with alacrity, because, though kind as towards others, they are also delightful to himself. Perhaps the true test of the performance of duty is, when it involves the taking up of the Cross."

Of Mr Wilson's piety no intimate friend had any doubt; and yet no friend was so intimate as to know the exact time and circumstances in which that piety originated. On any subject if his feelings could not be surmised, they were not likely to be spoken, and his own religious experience was about the last theme on which his Christian humility, not to say his constitutional delicacy of mind, would have allowed him to expatiate. His love to the Saviour, the deep reverence with which he approached sacred things, his intimate acquaintance with the Word of God, his tenderness of conscience, his meek, gentle, peace-making spirit, were known and read of all men; but at what period, and through what agencies the amiable man became the still more amiable Christian, is more a matter of inference than a point on which any one can give precise information.

As already mentioned, from the time when he quitted the writer's office until he had nearly reached his thirtieth year, Mr Wilson contended with weak health and broken spirits. Contrasting his own blighted prospects with the

radiant paths and redundant vigour of friends and contemporaries, members of his own family inclusive, if he did not say, "I do well to be angry," he could not help feeling many times gloomy; nor does it appear that there came at the critical moment any helping hand, any counsellor so appreciating and sympathising, as to indicate the alternatives of honourable occupation, and cheer into hope and self-reliance his sensitive spirit. But whilst his contemplative and poetical propensities entailed the reproach of day-dreaming, and whilst others were too busy with their own pursuits to look after the interests of the romantic invalid; betwixt native diffidence and bodily languor, he had not sufficient energy for self-assertion, and was often ready to succumb to the dreariest of all anticipations, a life of inglorious inutility.

Since his death a fragment has been found among his papers, the only contribution towards an autobiography now in existence, or which it is likely that he ever wrote. It seems to have been commenced as an effort at self-examination, and begins with some allusion to his early trials and disappointments. But with characteristic tenderness and humility, he soon passes from his afflictions to his own faults and infirmities, and the retrospect is alike indicative of the clearer light and habitual lowliness of his later years.

"When a person is actuated by the love of God as well as man, when he applies the Saviour's gracious words 'do this in remembrance of me,' not solely to the partaking of the sacrament of the Supper, but to the performance of whatever he may be called upon to do, however destructive to himself—when he has respect to the recompence of reward, and remembers that the eye of the all-seeing God, for ever sleepless and undimmed, is upon him by night and day, then is he truly steadfast and not afraid, then shall not his youth be joyless, nor his manhood useless, but even his old age, so often desolate, 'shall be clearer than the noon-day.' I shall not say that I lived without God in the world, but I often felt God-forsaken, which I surely would not have done had I simply laid myself and all my sins and sorrows at the foot of the Cross, trusting to 'the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.' I thought, in truth, far more of my sufferings than of my sins, and looked not, at least confidingly, 'on Him whom I had pierced.' Had I acknowledged the Lord in all my ways, He would have directed my paths, and made my darkness light. O God, may I now say, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?' The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?' May that faithful saying be accepted and deeply engraven on my heart, 'that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,' to 'blot out

the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,' to reconcile the world to God, 'not imputing to them their trespasses,' so that I who was some time 'afar off,' may be made nigh by the shedding of the Saviour's blood, while I confess with my tongue and believe with my heart that Jesus is the Son of God, who raised Him from the dead. O holy Father, may it come to pass that in the place where it was said unto us, 'Ye are not my people,' there shall we be called 'the children of the living God.'

"The test, as it seems to me, of a person acting upon, or being actuated by the highest principles, is this, that under similar circumstances we would again follow precisely the same course, altogether irrespective of results. But as I myself would, if I could throw myself back into former times and circumstances, in all probability follow an entirely opposite course from that which I have actually pursued, I conceive there must have formerly been (and may still exist), as great a mixture of pride and folly in the feelings by which I have been regulated, as of true humility and Christian wisdom.

"Most people in early life are fond of building castles in the air, and are constitutionally careless at that period of their own interests; and my poor castles, however fair and glittering to my own fancy, certainly far brighter and more beautiful than anything I can now conjure up, were in no way founded on filthy lucre. Alas! for 'gor-

geous cloudland,' and the 'world of dreams!' Alas! for the difference now greater than that of light and darkness, between the confiding imaginations of youth and the actual knowledge of after-years! Romance and reality! the peaceful repose of early and undoubting affection, and then—the battle of life. Who can relieve us from the body of sin and death? vain is the help of man; may we look evermore to that Rock which is sure and steadfast, and which, in its serene brightness, overlooks and illumines the darkness even of the valley of the shadow of death (making death itself a shadow), and which the waters of Jordan cannot overflow. Yet in reading the Word of God, although my views of God's providence and scheme of redemption were very dark, I was not without consolation, and I often dwelt with pleasure on such passages as the following:—'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.' 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' 'He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds.' 'Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.' 'To this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.' I fear I trembled not at the 'word,' though my soul was disquieted within me; though broken down by my sorrows,

the burden of sin was not grievous, and I lightly esteemed the God of my salvation. Though weary and heavy laden, I went not to the fountain of living water, I sought not the bread of life (Lord, evermore give us that bread), but endeavoured (a vain endeavour) by a dogged resolution, an obstinate endurance of great discomforts of mind and body, to withstand adversities of whatever kind, instead of looking to Him who redeemeth the soul of His servants, so that 'none of those that trust in Him shall be desolate.' For we have not an high priest who 'cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.' I had great con- consolation then from all promises to the downcast and disconsolate, such as 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven;' 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;' and so far this was well. But did I not put my sufferings in front of my faith, and my patient endurance almost in place of it, as if I *merited* the compassionate love of God simply because I suffered, instead of seeking to be justified (solely as well as freely) by His grace, 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus?'

"That the love of God was upon me I do not doubt, because we know that He 'first loved us,' and this only shews how great and abounding is the compassionate goodness of Him who calleth sinners to repentance. But that I loved God in return, or that the cross which I took

up and bore, was the cross of Christ, I can scarcely believe, when I call to remembrance my anxious dissatisfied condition, my unmanly depression and discontent, and my entire want of anything that could be called Christian cheerfulness, or actual heartfelt resignation to the will of God. In fact, I brooded over my own sufferings and distresses, instead of rejoicing in that 'one offering by which He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified—the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.' What marvel, then, that I was so often disconsolate, that I felt so seldom and so slightly the 'joy of believing?' I laboured and was heavy laden and was sore oppressed, with a painful constitution of body and a feeble constitution of mind; I was hedged in by difficulties on every side and surrounded by thick darkness; and yet I refused the call of the Divine Redeemer's love,—'Come unto *me*, and I will give you rest.' Had I accepted of that invitation fully and without reserve, then assuredly I might have been 'troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.'

"I therefore come to the conclusion that my sufferings have been greatly imbittered by my sins, and chiefly by my disobedience in not recognising, in almost any of my misfortunes, the chastening hand of a loving Father. But 'if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto

God, how much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life!'"

Of human helps, the first and greatest undoubtedly was his excellent wife; and the consolations to which he was introduced under her gentle guidance became unspeakably precious, when he was again left alone in the house of his pilgrimage. "Christianity is the religion of the sorrowful," and the balm which then healed his wounded spirit left a deepened tincture in all his after history. Nor amongst the outward influences which tended to confirm his faith and mature his piety, can we omit a faithful and earnest ministry, and the ecclesiastical events of 1843. Like every ordeal, the Disruption was an application of first principles. Few of his personal friends saw the matter in the same light; but if the sentiments which, as a Presbyterian, he had hitherto professed were not mere ecclesiastical phrases, but the expression of solemn truths, he saw no alternative but to carry them out, and quit, with all its immense advantages, the old and time-honoured Establishment. His minister, the Rev. Dr Julius Wood, excepted, he and another elder were the only members of New Greyfriars' Session who took this step; and, like every other step in his career, he took it quietly and unobtrusively: but the taking of it was not without significance at the moment, nor, as will be at once conceded by the

candid reader, whether approving or condemning, was such a step likely to be without considerable import in his subsequent history. As one incidental consequence, he was brought into much more intimate relations with his then youthful kinsman already mentioned, the Rev. John Sym, who now became his pastor, in whom he beheld the specimen of living Christianity which realised his own ideal—sound sense, yet deep devotion; strong convictions and decided actings, without aught of censoriousness or controversial asperity; true spirituality in union with great intellectual vigour; and an ardent enjoyment of the sublime and the beautiful: and whilst they found in each other's society all the delight of kindred spirits, Mr Wilson did not enjoy the scriptural instructions and fervent exhortations of the preacher the less because of the lucid cogency of his reasoning and the many charms of his style.

On the day when he was ordained an elder, the late Sir Ralph Abercrombie said to those assembled, "I have been often entrusted by my Sovereign with honourable and important commands in my profession as a soldier, and His Majesty has been pleased to reward my services with distinguished marks of his royal approbation; but to be the humble instrument, in the office of an elder, of putting the tokens of my Saviour's dying love into the hands of one of the meanest of His followers, I conceive to be the highest honour that I can receive on this side

heaven." Such were Mr Wilson's feelings. To his sensitive nature, everything like an appearance in public was trying; but regarding the office as one highly honourable and responsible, after he had undertaken it he would allow nothing to deter him from the discharge of its duties. He was an excellent elder. Shrewd and sagacious, his opinion was all the more weighty on account of the modesty with which it was stated, and his mild conciliatory spirit made him a favourite with all his colleagues. With his tender-heartedness, he was a welcome visitor in the poor man's home and in the house of mourning; and his accurate methodical habits made him anxious that all things should be done "decently and in order." On the eve of the communion Sabbath he used always to visit the church, in order to satisfy himself that all its arrangements were complete, and he was extremely solicitous to ensure that outward decorum and solemnity, which in his own case he found so conducive to the full impression and enjoyment of the sacred season. It was on such occasions that the two following letters were addressed to his dear friend and fellow-elder, D. Crole, Esq. :—

"Woodville, 21*st Oct.* 1846.

"My dear Sir,—I have written a few lines with regret to our minister, informing him that, in consequence of an increased attack of swelling and internal inflammation in

the face, I am very apprehensive of being unable to leave home to-morrow. I am now fearful that I may not be able to rally in time for the performance of my public duties on the Sacramental Sabbath. The sacred nature of those duties debars that forced service which one may sometimes bring to bear on worldly works. I think if called upon to actual labour during sickness, I could break stones till I broke my back; but I cannot bring myself, at least am very unwilling to do so, to connect this great privilege and labour of love with such painful bodily effort as might be required of me, if my present attack does not abate. I have scarcely any hope of getting out to-morrow; but I shall anxiously hope and pray that it may please God to remove some of my discomfort before the Sabbath morning. I am sure that in my present state I could not go through even the manual part of the ceremony, even were it not one requiring a fitting frame of mind not often vouchsafed during bodily suffering. My particular complaint unfortunately unfits me more than most others from any comfortable intercourse with my fellow-creatures, while it continues in any excess. Even in its ordinary condition, it renders that intercourse much less easy or convenient than I would desire it. But amid many blessings I must not repine. 'THY will be done.'"

TO D. CROLE ESQ.

"WOODVILLE, *July* 26, 1852.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Our Communion Sabbath proceedings, notwithstanding your lamented absence, went on with all comfort and propriety, so far as external forms were concerned, and I trust with spiritual advantages to not a few. The Lord of the vineyard who discerneth the heart, alone knows what good fruit may be borne through these solemn observances. One's own experience too truly tells him how transitory the deeper and more holy affections are apt to be; but this renders it just the more necessary that, in all abasement, we should seek again and again to draw from the well of living waters. 'And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never more hunger—he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' What a complexity of toil and trouble would be saved to us by a sincere, simple, unbroken belief in any one of many brief statements in the Holy Scriptures—to have it so engraven upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit (vouchsafed to them that ask it), as to be felt like an existing presence with every breath we draw! 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' How strange that there should be either doubt or difficulty in the matter, yet how certain

that now as of old the seed still falls by the wayside and is trodden down, or withers on the barren rock, or is choked up by thorns! I desire to dwell upon my own waywardness and want of (abiding and sustaining) faith. It cannot be but that the frequent absence of '*joy*' in believing must arise from the weakness of belief—that is, from a want of simplicity and earnestness, and from an effort to build up a 'living temple' for ourselves—instead of resting in the blessed assurance that in our Father's house are many mansions prepared for them who through faith are inheritors of the promises."

As early as 1842, Mr Wilson had written the following letter to a young friend, like himself, an ardent zoologist, but who appears to have cherished some thoughts of entering the ministry:—

"I hope I may infer from your letter that you are as determined in your natural history pursuits as ever. I heard it rumoured with regret that you were meditating a change towards a more sacred calling, against which it may seem unnatural that any one should endeavour to persuade another. But if you feel yourself under the influence of such a solemn and spiritual state of mind, I think you should consider how useful you may be without any change in your worldly calling. Your good conduct

and intelligence have brought you, under God's blessing, into an honourable and independent position, in which your influence may be considerable over the minds of many thoughtless persons, and I think you are called upon rather to maintain that position than to sacrifice it. Our great want in all societies at present, is the absence or rarity of spiritually-minded laymen, and of these the influence is often greater than that of the clergy themselves. They mingle more easily in society and under less formal restraints, and frequently obtain more credit from the inconsiderate than the professed—I mean the professional—servants of the Saviour. You should consider the good, though it may be in a more limited way than you desire, which you have it in your power to effect even now, and the years which would require to elapse before you could be called into a wider field of action, to say nothing of the obstacles which may intervene to prevent your being effectively so called at all. Perhaps I have no business to enter into this matter; but I know you will take it in good part, as you cannot misconstrue my motives."

Mr Wilson exemplified his own maxims. With a disposition the reverse of aggressive, it would have been impossible for him to burst the barriers and assail formalism or indifference as some conversational evangelists

have done so admirably; but he fulfilled his function. His light shone. It was known that he was a Christian, and in his entire deportment it was seen what a gracious, endearing thing practical Christianity is. It did not quench his wit. It did not make him ascetic or austere. It did not burn his fishing-rod, nor did it banish poetry and *belles lettres* from his library. It did not even hinder him from laughing or making others laugh. But it made him temperate in all things, and scrupulously truthful. His natural kindness and tenderness of feeling it systematised into a painstaking habit of beneficence; and whilst it took from his pungent humour every trace of personal acerbity, into his own pensive and once dejected spirit it infused an element no less sustaining than the hope full of immortality. In his blameless, peaceful walk there was a visible sermon, and the cordial sunshine he diffused was a contribution to the gospel more rare and precious than texts scholastically explained, or tracts, however excellent, mechanically distributed.

The subject of this biography had now finished his sixtieth year, and entered that seventh decade which Dr Chalmers calls "the Sabbath of our earthly pilgrimage." But as in the case of his illustrious friend himself, the last day of the great week could scarcely be said to dawn sabbatically. His hands were full of occupation, and his health was utterly broken.

TO THE REV. JAMES HAMILTON, D.D.

"WOODVILLE, 16*th Jan.* 1856.

"MY DEAR SIR,—We were talking of you this morning at breakfast-time, and now your note is put into my hand. I often thought of yourself and 'Excelsior' in the course of the autumn, and bore in mind your application and my promise to do what I could in the way of another paper. I had rather a sore time of it, having not well got round from the debilitating effects of an early spring illness, and feeling somewhat feeble all summer; then I was laid up again by a severe attack of rheumatic gout, which confined me to my room for nearly two months, and left me crippled and very much shaken. As the winter advanced, I somehow took it into my head that 'Excelsior' was finished, and that any natural history article you might have wanted had probably been supplied by some abler and nearer hand. My autumn illness was very unfortunate, as it came upon me in the middle of an article on Fisheries, which I had promised Adam Black—a promise which I fulfilled ineffectively and with 'difficulty and labour hard,' for I could scarcely hold the pen. At this moment I scarcely know what to say about anything beyond this, that to-morrow morning Sir William Gibson-Craig, Mr Bouverie Primrose, and myself, have to start for London as a deputation to Lord Palmerston on business of the

Board of Fisheries, which the Powers that be are about to demolish. I shall endeavour to see you when in London, or shall write. We go to Fenton's Hotel, St James' Street."

A brief visit to London was accomplished, and the deputation found a favourable reception from the Government. On the day after his return, Mr Wilson wrote the following letter :—

TO MISS TAYLOR.

"Woodville, *24th January* 1856.

"The Crystal Palace is certainly a great, even a grand affair, and in the full flush of summer the terraced grounds and gardens must be very striking. But inside, one misses the redundant outpouring of the riches of the earth, the gorgeous fabrics, the precious natural products, 'barbaric pearls and gold,' which were formerly so lavishly outspread as subjects of deliberate study. I doubt not the casts and busts and architectural imitations would be of great interest and extremely instructive; but the apparent failure in the bazaar and industrial departments throws rather an air of wasteness as well as vastness—a look of inutility which to me injured the general impression. I was too much fatigued to be able to go round the gardens, or study

the stucco beasts outside, although I had often discussed them with poor Edward Forbes, who gave up a good deal of his time to their fabrication and arrangement, as well as to that of the 'human' illustrations in the interior.

"The other day I was amused by the address on a letter from a naturalist in Paris, who is rather proud of his English :—

'England,
Sir James Wilson,
Lover of Insects,
Woodville, Edinburgh.'

He sends me a priced catalogue of Spanish and Algerian beetles. Many of them are very beautiful, but I have more insects already than I can keep in order, and so must decline any additions, at least by purchase. Talking of beetles : a good many of mine are getting a little mouldy on the back, I suppose from being, many of them, on a ground floor, and so seldom aired by being looked at. As you can see small things close at hand, it will surely be a good work, and a very useful one to me, for you to undertake,—touching the backs of a few thousands with a fine hair pencil, dipped in alcohol. Spirit of turpentine is fully the best,—the peculiar and penetrating odour being distasteful to insect life, and so keeping off moths, &c. But the fumes, as I have found from ex-

perience, are apt to produce headache on the part of the performer, so I promise you a glass of whisky.

"Just before Christmas I paid a visit to the Black Isle in Ross-shire. On returning home I started at six in the morning, in an open dog-cart, the wind high and piercing. I was half frozen before I got down to Kessock Ferry, opposite Inverness. Instead of crossing it, as usual, in ten minutes, we were beat back, and took more than half-an-hour. I had then to walk against the wind (a boy carrying my bag) a good (to me bad) mile and a half, up to Inverness. I tried to wear a respirator, but didn't know how, and thought it impeded my breathing. At all events, I got very asthmatic, with discomfort from pain in chest and side, and had to stop ever and anon, and crawl like a snail even when under way. All the other people, men, women, and children, were running like roe-deer to catch the train! For me such 'Excursion' I felt, as Lord Jeffrey said, 'would never do;' so I gave up the attempt, and was more than ten minutes past my time. However, this had no worse effect than that I finally got to Edinburgh next day to supper instead of to dinner, as I would have done had I not missed the morning train. I am sure you would have commiserated your Uncle James, had you seen him exhausted and breathless, leaning against a buttress, near Inverness, and heaving heavily, even like a stranded porpoise left alone upon the shallow sands."

TO THE REV. JAMES HAMILTON, D.D.

"WOODVILLE, 27*th February* 1856.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I regretted not having the pleasure of seeing you during my very brief stay in London. I was obliged to devote myself almost exclusively to the business I had in hand, and when that was over, felt rather too tired to undertake other things. So I came home as soon as possible. I have had rather more than enough to do since I got back. I thought myself just about to be at leisure when the Blackwoods applied to me for an article on the Fishery Board question, which, under the circumstances, I could scarcely refuse. I got that launched off for the March number of their magazine, and now our worthy representative, Mr Adam Black, has put into my hands two articles (Helminthology and Ichthyology) which it seems I wrote for his 'Encyclopædia Britannica' long ago, and which must now be revised for the current edition of the same. Helminthology is required without delay, and so to oblige Black I must do it first and foremost.

"I wish to know how 'Excelsior' stands. When do you require a short article, or how long can you wait? Which article is it that you most incline to? I think you said you had two wood-cuts."

TO MISS TAYLOR.

"Woodville, *25th April* 1856.

"If you wish to know about Uncle James, I am sorry to say that he still continues very feeble, with an increase of asthma, which makes locomotion, that is self-sustained or pedestrian motion, so burdensome, that he has not been beyond his own gate for a couple of months, except in a cab.

"God forbid I should complain, or be otherwise than thankful, not only for the enjoyment resulting from the more active exercises of days gone by, but for the many blessings and comforts by which I am still surrounded. These asthmatic feelings come upon me now even in the house, and when I am scarcely moving at all. Whether they will subside as the season improves, I know not. Their approaches and increase have been very gradual and long continued, and so it may be that they are destined to increase. I hope I may be grateful in the one case, and patient in the other. I am taking frequent drives now, as I cannot walk beyond the garden boundaries, and even within these my steps are few and slow. T'other day I 'put in' some mignonette seed with my own hands, but had a chair beside me, and performed most of the work sitting. A redbreast, which perhaps remembered me in a more robust condition, seemed somewhat surprised at my attitude and mode of working. Talking of gardening: I

send you a few hollyhock seeds, which I believe ought to be sown at this time. Of course, they will not flower till the autumn of next year. If they make growth this season, they should be planted out early next spring, when they will be about the size of smallish carrots. I think I said once before that I am not very anxious as to your cultivating *autumnal* plants. I think you may then be better, that is, more humanely occupied in cultivating other people, and recovering, in the breezy north, from the enervating effects of a southern locality. By the by, tell me about turtle-doves and things of that kind which occur in Kent, and of which we here know nothing. Please also to send me a small supply of early glow-worms. I believe they are still more abundant in the south of England than in our own beloved vales [of Westmoreland.] The posts are so rapid now that I have no doubt a small colony might be sent safely and salubriously in any lozenge box, with a few stalks of moist grass to lay hold of, and prevent their being too much tossed about.

"To-day my people are all off on foot, some three miles westward towards Colinton, with the Sym children and some other youngsters, including two dogs, and about two dozen of hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches. Joy be with them. I thought at one time of joining them in a cab, but the expectation of my doing so might have hampered their movements 'in dingle and bushy dell,' and so I have

fixed to stay at home in solitude. I am to have my chop and potatoes along with their tea and toast, when they return, no doubt well wearied, 'twixt five and six.

"I am now getting wearied myself, having had other writing to do already, with more in expectancy. I cannot do much at a time, but being so much within-doors, and paying no visits, I have plenty of time, had I the capacity to use it to any proper purpose. The only things I have got through since I reported to you my return from London, are two articles for Blackwood,—one on 'The Scottish Fisheries,' and another, not out till the first of May, on 'Fish Ponds and Fishing Boats.' I also re-wrote the article 'Helminthology' (leeches, earth-worms, &c.), for the current edition of the 'Encyclopædia,' and a short paper on the 'Columbidæ,' or Pigeons, for which I was entreated by Dr James Hamilton for his 'Excelsior,' which in my ignorance I had fancied finished long ago. I have other things in hand, but I must take them leisurely, and begin in good time so as not to be pressed, as I have so often been. When you come down you will lend me a helping hand. Do send us a line or two soon touching your summer and autumnal plans. We shall rely on seeing you some day, and remember that with myself time is passing quickly. Give our kindest regards to your mother, and believe me ever, dear child, your affectionate,

"James Wilson."

His work was done. Ever since his severe illness in the spring of 1855, owing to the state in which his lungs were ascertained to be, he evidently knew that his life was precarious; and although from consideration for the feelings of those around him, he forbore from saying much on the subject, by gentle allusions he sought to prepare their minds for the event which he foresaw could not be distant. Nor were these hints the less plain from being sometimes playfully made. During that spring the Life of Etty the painter was sent to his house amongst other books, from the Reading Club; but so similar were the details of Etty's illnesses to the attack under which Mr Wilson was labouring, that his daughter and niece privately agreed to return the volumes. However, his interest in art made him ask for the book. He read it, and, as was expected, the same thing which had struck his family struck himself; for, as he closed the work, with his quiet smile he said, "Poor Etty! his case seems to have been very like my own; asthma, rheumatic gout, and—a niece."

But even although he had said nothing, the eye of affection could not fail to mark various indications of his own presentiment. Not only did he arrange his worldly affairs, but he shewed more than usual anxiety to bring to a completion any work he had undertaken. Above all, there was a deepening earnestness in his allusions to sacred things, and the Bible, which was laid on his pillow,

was often studied during the sleepless watches of the night.

His journey to Inverness at the close of 1855, and his visit to London at the beginning of 1856, did not so much indicate any real convalescence as they shewed how readily his active spirit forgot the frailties of the frame. He was an invalid, "feeble and sore broken;" and it was chiefly his long-confirmed habit of alacrity in the service of others which carried him through the large amount of work achieved in the last eighteen months of his assiduous and benevolent career.

A month before his death he wrote as follows:—"Did M—— mention poor A. H——'s death from bilious fever? It is very striking so soon after her brother's. How few remain now of my own generation!—of the preceding, none that I know of. May those in the fore-front of the battle now make peace upon the sure foundation!"

The close of April brought round the communion season in Edinburgh, and he shewed great anxiety to join his brethren in commemorating the Saviour's dying love, as well as to officiate once more as an elder. His desire was granted, but at the cost of much suffering. So distressing was his breathlessness that his friends feared he would not be able to go through the services of the day; and when he returned to his home he quitted it no more, till he exchanged it for the Father's house.

On the 2d of May, he was unable to leave his room, nor could he even lie down; he sat with his head supported on a table, a position which he was obliged to retain day and night through the remainder of his illness. He liked to listen to reading, and often asked to have the Bible read to him; but all utterance was attended with such effort that he seldom attempted more than a few broken words. On one occasion he said, "It is not easy to speak when one is struggling for breath, and feeling as if about to suffocate; but I wish you to know that my *mind* is perfectly satisfied; He is my Lord and my God. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' I have had much forgiven me, and may well love much." He then gave several messages and orders, mentioning some little memorials which he wished to be given to several friends. He also expressed a desire to be buried in the Dean Cemetery, where his brother the Professor had been buried two years before, adding, in allusion to his wife's grave elsewhere, "The other spot will still be sacred ground to you." Next day when asked how he felt, he said, "Faint, yet pursuing. Looking unto Jesus."

His mind continued calm and peaceful to the last. Even when most exhausted, he was still upon the watch lest those around him should be over-fatigued, and many and touching were his expressions of affectionate gratitude. Amongst the words which fell from his lips are remem-

bered, "Christ the hope of glory." "There is none other name given under heaven, whereby men can be saved." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." During the night between Saturday the 17th and Sabbath the 18th of May, he took leave of his family, saying, "There is no darkness in the valley; it is all bright." The twenty-third Psalm was read to him, and at the fourth verse he repeated the words, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;" and so, early on that Sabbath morning, the beautiful place which had known him so long, knew him no more, for he had gone to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

If the foregoing pages have at all answered their purpose, there is no need to conclude with a formal delineation of Mr Wilson's character. Its main features can scarcely be overlooked—its meekness of wisdom, its warmth of affection, its unostentatious all-comprehending kindness. And although some of its most exquisite lineaments can never be described, and will therefore be no longer remembered when a few faithful memories have passed away, it is fondly hoped that even this imperfect memorial may preserve a few of the lessons of his history. For ourselves, we confess that we greatly admire

those contrasted qualities which, in his happy example, found themselves in harmony—the scientific accuracy which neither clogged his excursive imagination, nor stiffened into academic pedantry; the fantastic playfulness under which, like a deep tide beneath a sunny ripple, still flowed on his strong affection and his steadfast purpose; the large amount of work which he contrived to do with a look of leisure, and almost under the pretext of recreation; the freshness of feeling, and the width of innocent enjoyment, which co-existed with such tenderness of conscience and such faith unfeigned. And if there are some readers exempted from the constraints of a calling to whom his career, so useful and honourable, says, "Go and do likewise;" others may find consolation in those early disappointments which Fatherly Goodness transformed into eventual blessings, and amidst the clouds of their morning may still hope and pray for a bright afternoon and a peaceful evening.

CHAPTER X.

Facts and Inferences, Grabe and Gay.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.
—And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent."—TENNYSON.

"Leibgeber especially admired in his satirical foster-brother the diamond-pin which united poetry and mildness with a world-braving stoicism."—RICHTER.

THERE is a wicked passage in "Elia" where he says, "I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me, and in truth I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. His conversation is as a book. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher on your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it." And possibly, for this last insinuation, there may be foundation in fact: at least, we have often been amused by witnessing the effect of the more indirect and subtile kinds of wit on our sincere and solemn countrymen. Yet, upon occasion, a Scotchman can be merry, and the land which gave birth to Robert Burns and Harry Erskine, to Andrew Thomson and Thomas Guthrie, can both produce and appreciate humour. But it must be admitted that the humour which suits us best is that sort which possesses a certain breadth and vigour, and in order to be successful

amongst so grave a people, sly strokes and "pauky" hits must be hard enough to penetrate a mail of more than average thickness. Any frivolous creature can be tickled with a straw; it needs a battering ram to shake the sides of Behemoth.

But the wit of James Wilson was hardly Scottish. Quite distinct from the rollicking exuberance and contagious glee of Christopher North, as well as from the diverting drollery of Dr Thomson; and still more remote from the coarse buffoonery and caustic malice of Clerk of Eldin, it was more akin to the easy playfulness of La Bruyere, or the quiet, kindly humour which glistens over the more familiar epistles of William Cowper. Charles Lamb and James Wilson would have understood each other.

Such as it was, his wit was inexhaustible. It flowed like light from the lantern-fly, like the phosphorescence from a Medusa in a summery sea; and whether it wandered zigzag like a will o' the wisp, or settled at the masthead like the fire of St Elm—whether it sparkled up in a pungent and unexpected repartee, or spread out for the whole evening in a subtile and fantastic aurora,—spontaneous and abounding, to restrain it was the effort, to exert it was none: but, never malignant, it made no enemies and hurt no feelings, and, under a wise man's control, it had the rare excellence of stopping in time.

"He was the prince of punsters," as his friend Dr George Wilson once remarked to us. But what of that? Who can photograph a flying shot? or what can be poorer than a printed pun?

"It is very difficult," writes the Duke of Argyll in a letter of characteristic recollections, "in the form of anecdote, to give an impression, to those who did not know him, of the inimitable fun and *light-in-handness* of his conversation; for it is very rarely that this kind of humour can bear formal repetition. I recollect one instance of that humour which much amused those who heard it, connected with the Fishery question. The subject of fishing for herring with what are called trawl nets had been under discussion—whether it was or was not to be considered as an illegitimate mode of fishing,—most of the company being very adverse to it. The conversation happened to change suddenly, and a gentleman present speaking of the health of his wife, who was a great invalid, mentioned that her room was under a chapel, and, as she was unable to move, she had a gutta percha pipe carried through the ceiling to the pulpit, by which means she heard the sermon perfectly. James Wilson observed, with the greatest gravity, that he could not approve of such a proceeding; 'it is in fact a kind of trawling for sermons.' The gravity of his countenance and the tones of his voice were great elements in the effect which he produced, and these cannot

be recalled to strangers. It was on the same occasion that as much amusement was occasioned by an argument he had with a member of the Peace Society. There being at the time some rumour of difficulties with France, with reference to the Newfoundland fisheries, the peace-apostle spoke with horror of 'the idea of going to war for some codfish;' and Wilson only replied, 'Very true; but then ye see they're such very *(vurra) fine* codfish.' His opponent gave up the argument in despair, and joined very heartily in the general laugh. But I fear that such recollections as these do not bear carrying."

In the same way we might mention random instances: how in regard to a prosing and pedantic entomologist he remarked, "It explains the saying, 'The grasshopper shall be a burden:'" and how, during a severe illness, when a friend connected with the Stamp Office came to see him, and when some one said, "Take care, Mr C., where you set your feet, for there are a good many carpet-nails scattered on the floor," Mr Wilson, who was in much distress from the oppression on his chest, had still breath to say, "Mr C. will pick them up; he's a *tacks*-gatherer (tax-gatherer)." During one of the Highland excursions, when the party had risen from the hay and were comparing experiences round the breakfast-table, Martin Barry said, "I was awakened by a hen pecking at my ear." "No wonder," retorted Mr Wilson; "she mistook it for an *ear* of *Barley*." "Nay,"

replied Dr Barry, "there is no *l* in my name." "Give me an inch and I'll take the *l* (ell)," was the ready rejoinder. "But, friend," urged the Quaker, "I spell my name with two *r*'s." "Really," rejoined his tormentor, "in a hen you might excuse the *rr* (error)."

Flat as are all such sallies when written down, they were irresistible at the moment; and it is hardly necessary to add, that much as he excelled in a *jeu des mots*, few men could have less patience with those weariful word-snappers who, always on the wait for double meanings, will interrupt with wretched puns a conversation to which they have nothing else to contribute. Even wit itself was far from being in Mr Wilson's eyes the best of gifts. He would have heartily accorded with what Douglas Jerrold has said in one of his letters to Dickens: "I am convinced that the world will get tired (at least I hope so) of this eternal guffaw at all things. After all, life has something serious in it. It cannot be all a comic history of humanity." Much as he contributed to the amusement of others, Mr Wilson was himself a grave and earnest man, and even when he made people smile, he had no wish to make them frivolous; nor have we any doubt that a good man's playfulness will do more to make his neighbours wise and thoughtful, than a dull man's solemnity.

From the papers which Mr Wilson contributed to various journals, a volume or two of miscellanies, at once

interesting and instructive, might easily be compiled, and they would bring out the characteristics of his mind better than these can be described in any words of ours. In the meanwhile, as it has been our lot to go over his very extensive authorship for ourselves, and as we can scarcely hope that the leisure of many readers will permit a similar exploration, it may be an acceptable service if we bead together on one string a few pearls and bits of amber—a few of his poetic fancies, as well as of those facts which carry a grotesque idea or good lesson in them.

THE CRABS OF ARRAN.

Although crabs, lobsters, and other edible shell-fish, are more or less distributed over all parts of the Arran coast, they are most numerous in the southern district near Pladda. We remember, during a former visit, being witness to what was to us a novel mode of catching crabs. We happened to be astir in a small boat in Brodick Bay about three o'clock one beautiful summer morning. Our chief object was to watch the soft uprising of those "fleecy folds, voluminous and vast," which during early twilight hours brood over the yet sombre valleys at the base of Goat-fell, and to watch the rosy tints as they descended from peak to peak, while

> "Fair Aurora, lifting up her head,
> All blushing rose from old Tithonus' bed."

But we soon perceived two men in a small craft, who seemed quite unconscious that

"The flaming chariot of the world's great eye"

was now almost upon them. Their little boat hung motionless on the then waveless mirror of the Bay, in about ten feet depth of water; and after for a minute or thereby holding their faces close upon the surface, they seemed suddenly to pull a long pole out of the water, with something adhering to its extremity. We soon found that they were taking advantage of the glassy stillness of the water to overlook the early walk of crabs. They no sooner saw these crusty crustaceans on the subaqueous sand, than they poked them behind with their long staves —the crabs turned round to revenge the indignity, and, like Russian gens-d'armes, seized upon the unsuspecting *poles*. These latter were slightly shaken by the fishermen, as if in pain or terror; the angry creatures clung all the closer, and were then rapidly hoisted into the boat. The moral we drew at the time, and have since maintained, was, that neither crab nor Christian should ever lose his temper.*—*Voyage round Scotland.*

* This crusty spectacle was probably witnessed on the morning so beautifully described at page 109.—Ed.

GULLS *VERSUS* GOATS.

As we were rowing ashore from the cutter, we observed a singular kind of encounter on a small island in Loch Laxford, between a troop of goats and a flock of sea-gulls. The goats were all as black as pitch, and the old ones were accompanied by some young retainers, which to us looked not much bigger than jackdaws, though as nimble as monkeys. Our notice was first attracted by seeing some of them descend from their rocky ledges, and gambol over a piece of green moist meadow ground. They had not done so, however, for more than a few seconds, before they were attacked most fiercely by a flock of gulls, which dived directly down upon them, and each time they did so the goats made a great spring, as if they found the horny beaks too much for either their fore or hind quarters. They were in a regular quandary, or what the Germans call a ffunke, and it was curious to observe how the gulls achieved their object, by always keeping the goats between themselves and the rocks, and thus at last driving them upwards from the meadow, where, we doubt not, lay their "callow young"—small, soft powder-puffs in woolly garments, which the horny hoof of kidling might have sorely incommoded, but for this brave parental interference. So the goats were gulled, and the gulls not kidnapped.—*The Voyage.*

LOCH BROOM,

It appears, possessed a very powerful preacher in the troublous times of 1745. His proper name was Robertson, although he was usually distinguished by the name of "*Am Ministeir làidir*," or, the Strong Minister. While present one day during divine service in the church of Fearn, a Gothic kind of building, covered with immense gray flags in place of slates, the roof came suddenly down upon the congregation. Mr Robertson remained upright, and making his way to the principal door, perceived that the lintel was giving way at one end; he instantly placed his shoulder beneath it, and stood in that supporting position till those who belonged to the movement party made their escape. He then re-entered among the crumbling ruins, and extricated his clerical friend from beneath the sounding-board of the pulpit, under which he lay ensconced with the addition of a mass of stones and rubbish. Having afterwards gone to London on business connected with the politics of the period, he was introduced to the Duke of Newcastle, who gave him a fair promise of pardon to one Hector Mackenzie, a condemned retainer of the Earl of Cromarty. The Duke on his departing proffered him his hand, which the *Ministeir làidir* squeezed with such energy that his grace reiterated his promise twice over, and the man was

saved. He (the Minister, not of State, but of Loch Broom) was once attacked in his own parish by two strong ruffians, to the child of one of whom he had refused baptism, on the score of the parent's unsuitable character and qualifications. Finding him at some distance from the manse, they threateningly renewed their application for the ordinance, which was as resolutely refused, upon which the fellows laid violent hands upon the pastor, swearing they would never let him go till he complied. A desperate struggle ensued, and Donald, perceiving that the minister was stronger than himself and his neighbour, drew his dirk, and inflicted a deep wound on Mr Robertson's right arm, notwithstanding which he beat them both, and sent Donald home again to study his catechism. It happened curiously enough, at an after period, that while crossing the Thames in a boat, Mr Robertson was assailed by a stentorian voice from one of the hulks in the river,—"O! a Mhaisteir Seumas, am bheil thu' g'am fhàgails' an so?"—[Oh! Mr James, are you going to leave me here?] Recognising instantly the speaker's voice, he answered, "Ah! a Dhònuil, bheil cuimhn agad air l'a na biodaig?"—[Ah! Donald, do you remember the day of the dirk?] This was rather a home-thrust, which the despairing convict tried to parry with, "Och! a Mhaisteir Seumas, is olc an t-àite cuimhnachan *so*."—[Oh! Mr James, bad place for remembrance is *this*.] And here the conversation

ceased; but the minister, in the true spirit of his holy calling, lost no time in employing his influence, which was considerable (he had from the first espoused the Hanoverian cause, and been personally serviceable both to Lord Loudon and President Forbes, on their retreat from Inverness to the Western Islands, on the return of the then victorious clansmen from the battle of Falkirk), and succeeded in obtaining a pardon for his enemy. The reader will be glad to learn, that after the culprit's return to his native country, he commenced and continued one of the most attached and grateful of his reverend benefactor's parishioners.

> "So Donald Dhu, who till that time
> Had been the wildest of his clan,
> Forsook his crimes, repress'd his folly,
> And after ten months' melancholy,
> Became a good and honest man."—*The Voyage.*

SUMBURGH ROOST.

When informed by the captain that we were off Sumburgh Head, the secretary, in spite of some tremendous lurches, made his way to the foot of the companion stairs, the higher portion of which he found blocked by the body of Jack, the cabin servant, who immediately removed himself upwards. At this moment a heavy sea struck the cutter on her weather quarter, and went right over her.

The shock made her lurch so to leeward that an immense surge came right over the lee gunwale, unceremoniously meeting the secretary in the face, and washing the aforesaid Jack off his legs. Meanwhile there was a corresponding row below. For ourself, knowing that we could in no way alter or amend the state of matters either by speech or action, we continued in a state of complacent, or at least uncomplaining repose. But an acquaintance in the after-cabin, connected with the Fishery service, became alarmed by the concussions which were taking place around. He was just about to spring from his berth, when unfortunately a large bag of potatoes, which had been somewhat hastily stowed away in his too near neighbourhood, suddenly opened its mouth, and after gaping at him for a couple of seconds, discharged its entire contents with angry violence on his unoffending person. However, he extricated himself with inconceivable rapidity, and made his appearance in dishabille to inquire into the cause of such contentious doings.

> "He tax'd not you, ye elements, with unkindness;
> He never gave you kingdoms, called ye daughters;"

but he thought that Jack ought to have turned the key of the potato store. We ourselves, inhabiting the main-cabin, escaped with a bottle of ink upon the bedclothes, while Mackenzie's Charts, an excellent work in three volumes elephant folio, flew across the cabin like so many butter-

flies, but fortunately falling rather short of our position, made harmless obeisance at our feet. It is possible that the sea would not have been shipped had the man at the helm manœuvred more skilfully, but at the same time we would strongly advise all those who desire to prolong the peaceful pleasure of a morning nap, to avoid perching in Sumburgh Roost.—*The Voyage.*

THE BIRCH FOREST MADE INTO BOBBINS.

We were somewhat surprised to find a bobbin manufactory about to be established here [Port Sunart]. The proprietor of the woods, as we were told, has agreed to deliver his birches at the mill door for seven shillings a ton. This seems a low price, but whether the bargain may be good or bad, it is a melancholy and fantastic thought to dwell on, that these fair woods, cut into pieces of a few square inches, are so soon to be set a-whirling amid the ceaseless din and flocky atmosphere of a cotton mill in Glasgow. "Everything is beautiful in its season," as O'Connell said to the curds and cream, and cotton mills are extremely useful in their way,—but whoever may have seen, as we did, the splendid crags, and the fair silvery stems of that

> "Most beautiful of forest trees,
> The lady of the woods,"

might have almost consented to go with undarned stockings for a month, sooner than that the insidious substance should be wound around their very hearts. Besides, if Bobbin & Co. have made too good a bargain, the greater is the pity that such fringing woods should be despoiled even to the laying bare of old majestic mountains, while the proprietor, whatever may be made of cotton, is himself *worsted.—The Voyage.*

Our next extracts from "The Voyage" let us a little deeper into the heart of the writer. In them we have glimpses of his love of home, his faithfulness to old friendships, his piety, his admiration of all goodness.

ORCADIAN LINNETS.

Close to either side of the southern end of the bridge which leads across to the northern promontory stands a great sentinel stone, as if the remains of a gateway or barrier. On the top of one of these a beautiful pair of linnets sat twittering and preening, secure as they thought upon almost the loftiest elevation which the neighbourhood afforded, and of course we did nothing to scare them from their stony height. They seemed quite tame, and very cheerful, as linnets are wont to be. We could see their little sparkling eyes and sharpened beaks, and we thought

of our own linties at home, and of the door at which they hang in sunny days, and of all that there go in and out, and for a time the dread worship of the Druids, and the cruel sacrifices of the sons of Odin, and the fierce contentions of the Sea-Kings, and even the actual presence of these mystical symbols of "the unknown God," all faded from our view; and we could see a low-roofed cottage, with leafy windows and an intertwining porch, and numerous shrubs and trees, and winding walks and many-coloured wreaths of "bright consummate flowers," and human hearts affectionate and true, and we blessed God for all His mercies.—*The Voyage.*

A SABBATH AT IONA.

It was the Sabbath morn, but the church service not being expected to commence for several hours, we thought the time in no way misspent in landing to meditate among the tombs. It is certainly, however, one disadvantage of the life we were at this time leading, that any regular attendance on stated ordinances can scarcely be relied on, so much in some respects are we at the mercy of winds, tides, and lee-shores, and are thus too frequently obliged to shape our course accordingly; but our private services are performed on board with regularity, and it is hoped we all know and remember, that wherever we be,

the same heavenly guidance is vouchsafed to those who seek it, and thus, though we "take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead us, and Thy right hand shall hold us." The greater disadvantage is, perhaps, that of the sailors, with whom this erratic mode of life is so much more frequent and prolonged, but they seem always well disposed to take advantage of whatever opportunities occur; and we have endeavoured to occupy their leisure hours on ship-board beneficially, by placing expositions of the great Christian doctrines in their hands in various forms.

It was not without a mournful feeling that we found ourselves again among these venerable ruins. It had been our fortune to visit Iona many long years ago, with a young enthusiastic German, who has since, "spurning the unprofitable yoke of care," attained a name of note in the literature of his country, and we now thought of bygone times more than became the interest of the sacred scene around us. It is probably one source of the confusion of misty minds like our own, that the suggestive principle should often be so strong within us as to cause the past alone to be seen through the present, while the present is only dimly caught during some distant future. At all events, we now found ourselves insensibly reverting towards early days, when the sun was brighter, and the

grass greener, the waves more lustrous, and the mountains far more magnificent than they have ever been in these degenerate times.

> "Then did no ebb of cheerfulness demand
> Sad tides of joy from melancholy's hand."

But, indeed, when we looked along the silent shore, and beheld the memorials of other days, and the many mournful emblems of decay and desolation which lay so thick around, what marvel was there that Time's mutations, and that heritage of woe, of which sooner or later all must be partakers, should have changed or chilled a feeble human heart.—*The Voyage.*

ST KILDA AND ITS MINISTER.

The day was yet in its prime, a lustrous summer day which might have gilded the palm-crowned glories of an Indian isle. The sky was bright above, and the great ocean heaved around us with a motion so subdued and gentle, that our hearts might have filled with "joy and gladness," were it not that the spirit of melancholy seems never far distant from what is at once so solemn and serene. In truth, the finger of God was in all things more visible than the hand of man, and as we glided through the "great waters," we strongly felt the grandeur of "His wonders in the deep." Therefore was our cheer-

fulness almost changed into reverential awe, as we gazed around on all the "dread magnificence" by which we were encompassed, for we felt as if we had entered into one of the great temples of the God of Nature! And if a scene which, however majestic, was still "of the earth," and destined to pass away, could create such elevating thoughts; to what height, past utterance, will not an entrance raise us into that house "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," where no storms nor tempests rage, either in the scowling skies or the far darker bitterer heart of man, but an everlasting joyfulness prevails, "as the angels in heaven!"

Caverns prevail along the bases of these ponderous cliffs, and one of the most remarkable of those on the southern side is that named Damph-an-Eiranich, so called from the fact which follows. An Irishman was crossing an inlet of his own green isle, with a keg of whisky, to make merry with his father and other friends one Christmas morning, but being carried out to sea by a squall, he was driven he knew not where, till he found himself at the mouth of a cave in St Kilda. He was descried by the natives from the cliffs, who at first entertained a superstitious fear of an individual who they thought must have either dropt from the clouds, or risen from the sea; but so soon as they perceived his boat, they lowered their ropes, and drew him up, when he was almost gone from want.

He remained with them for about a year, before an opportunity occurred of his being conveyed to his own country.

As it was now the close of day we did not land again, but sent our good minister ashore in the boat. We could then observe that almost the entire population of the island was assembled to receive him at the landing-place, and our men told us that it seemed a truly happy meeting. He himself had greatly enjoyed his little cruise from home of nearly two days and a night; and the Soa-side of St Kilda he had never before seen from the sea. We ourselves were much gratified by all we saw and heard, and will long cherish the recollection of scenes which made a deep impression upon our minds, however feebly we may have conveyed it to those of others. Our acquaintance with Mr Mackenzie was also a source of great satisfaction, and we hope for its renewal at some future time. There is something, we think, very solemn and even elevating in the idea of that person's position, humble and almost forlorn though it may seem. Separated so entirely from the world, with not a single native on the island who can enter into any community of subjects with him, so far as relates to the ordinary topics which occupy the minds of other men, or to those unforgotten though departed periods of his own earlier life to which in secret he cannot help reverting, his thoughts must become disentangled from many frivolous and vain expectations and pursuits by which

those of others are so often "disquieted within them:"—and so turning from a world which he cannot reach, and has ceased to desire, what in exchange does he seek for? He goes up to the mountain of the Lord, to the "House of the God of Jacob;" and so his barren rock, with all its bitter endurances, when softened by a Saviour's love, is made to yield that fountain of sweet water which springeth up into eternal life, and thus he finds rest unto his soul. What, then, to him are the howling tempests, or the ragings of the winter sea, as it rolls its tumultuous waves in vain though dread array around those lonesome dwellings? Why should he encourage vexing thoughts, or any "fearful looking forward," who possesses "the peace of God, which passeth understanding?" Does he not daily behold, in congregated myriads, those "fowls of the air" which sow not, neither reap, nor gather into barns, though "their heavenly Father feedeth them?" Therefore he takes no thought, saying, "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" for his heavenly Father knoweth that he hath need of all these things, and "He is faithful who promised."—*The Voyage.*

COLONSAY.

The weather unfortunately now became more moist and dull, but although we know not the number of long years

of mingled joy and sorrow which may have passed away since our last visit, we had no difficulty in recognising, in spite of mist and vapour, many an old familiar scene. It often happens that a few repeated persevering looks at what were once familiar places, have much the same effect as clearing away the moss and lichens which encrust an ancient tomb-stone, or rubbing the rust from off some old time-honoured coin. All that was dim, or even dead, in our remembrance, gains gradually increase of strength, till at last the sad waters of oblivion roll slowly backwards, and sunny scenes of youth or early manhood are brought to view in all their original brightness. So is it also with the well-remembered aspect of a much-loved, long-lost friend,—some one in whom a score of years (and no furlough) beneath a burning clime has changed the fair fresh hue of youth to that of the Nabob's hoarded gold, and has grizzled redundant locks once glossy as the raven's wing. The gay and limber youth, as wild with glee as any mountain fawn, can scarcely at first be recognised in the staid features and somewhat sombre bearing of the highly respectable middle-aged gentleman (retired upon a good allowance, and not without thought of the East India direction), who unexpectedly presents himself before you, under an old familiar name. And yet before the first cheerful evening you spend together has elapsed, the voice, the eye, the manner, mode of speech, the very

hair (even though it should afterwards prove a wig), return upon you as those of the self-same friend who gladdened the glory of your morning life with unalloyed affection, and before you part he not only seems in everything to be exactly as he was of old, but has also become one of the youngest men, except yourself, you ever met with.—*The Voyage.*

THE SARDINIAN SHEEP AND THE SAVANT.

M. F. Cuvier records an instance of what he regards as extreme stupidity on the part of these animals. Such as live in the Garden of Plants are exceedingly fond of bread, and when any one approaches their barrier, they draw near with a view to obtain it. This device is frequently made use of to entrap them, so as to enable their keepers to fasten collars around their necks, to prevent accidents previous to any one entering their domiciles; and although they seem exceedingly tormented and unhappy when thus held in bondage, they never acquire, from experience, sufficient sagacity to mistrust the collar which they see held in one hand if there is a slice of bread in the other. They are, in short, unable to combine their ideas in such a manner as to connect the collar with their captivity; and the younger Cuvier consequently holds them in some contempt. Now, we feel rather inclined to advocate the cause of the mouflon, and, without doubting that M.

F. Cuvier, from his long-continued experience as director of the Parisian Menagerie, will continue, by some means or other, to circumvent the most sagacious sheep that ever enters the capital of the great nation, we yet cannot see, in the fact recorded, anything more than another fact easily evoked from it, viz., that the animal in question had so familiarised itself with man, as to feel the desire of obtaining a favourite morsel more strongly than the fear of disagreeable consequences. There is no "bread at discretion" among the mountains of Sardinia; and more intellectual creatures have suffered from their love of good cheer.—*Quarterly Journal of Agriculture.*

AN APOLOGY FOR INSECTS.

If the value of a pursuit is to be estimated by the comparative ease with which it may be followed by persons of the most moderate fortunes, few can rank higher than entomology. While the specimens sought for by the mineralogist and student of geology are frequently heavy and cumbrous, and not seldom extremely expensive, and while that sad representative of the beauties of the living Flora, called a Hortus Siccus, is but a frail and fleeting memorial of the "days of other years," presenting, even after a tedious and troublesome process of preservation (by courtesy so called), no trace of their original bright-

ness; the most exquisite examples of entomological beauty, if not too roughly handled at the period of their capture, remain, with the most ordinary attention, for a lifetime in their pristine state,—and what that state actually is, all may satisfy themselves in the course even of the most superficial examination,—

> "For nature here
> Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will
> Her virgin fancies."

Exceeding in amount of species all the other subjects of zoology,—unrivalled in the dazzling brilliancy of their colours, which combine the clearness and decision of tint possessed by flowers, with the exquisitely varied markings of the feathered race and the metallic splendour of the mineral kingdom,—surpassed by no other work of creation in the wonderful structure of their parts, and certainly surpassing all in the adaptation of that structure to the perfect fulfilment of those natural, though to us still mysterious instincts, which in every age have excited the admiration of mankind,—is it to be wondered at that the study of insects should occupy a prominent place in our pursuit of knowledge? Much more do we wonder that thousands of the best educated, and in other respects most enlightened minds, should still feel averse to a study which unfolds such a world of unseen wonders. The subject, too, is literally inexhaustible; and while some who love

to methodise, and thereby to circumscribe, the subjects of human knowledge, or who err in their estimate of the perceptive powers of the human mind as applied to other matters of inquiry, may be deterred by the vague boundaries of such a field, a greater number, and with more propriety it is hoped, may be induced to enter it, from the very consideration of such a rich and unreaped harvest. While a fragment of inert matter, which chemical analysis determines to differ in its constituent proportions from other fragments previously examined, is once in a lustre dignified by the name of a new *species*, and the name of a Haüy or a Dolomieu is bestowed on the unconscious mass,—and while, even in the richer domain of British botany, the student of that science, however much he may extend our knowledge of the localities of plants, labours with but a feeble chance of adding to the actual list even of indigenous species, and has probably no chance at all of ever refreshing his eyes with the sight of a plant which nobody ever saw before,—it is far otherwise with the innumerable tribes of insect life. The "gilded summer-flies" are numerous as leaves in Vallombrosa. No recess of the forest so obscure but there the "winged messengers" are seen to sport and play; and each summer sunbeam falls not alone on the dewy herbage of the open glades, but lights up the gorgeous lines of those bright creatures which a mystical philosophy has ennobled as the types of

the disencumbered human soul, and which even the sombre Dante has named angelical.

> "Non v'accorgete voi, che noi siam vermi,
> Nati a formar l'angelica farfalla."

Every pool of water is pregnant with life; each lonely moor or old deserted quarry, which scarcely "feels in its barrenness one touch of spring," is the chosen abode of thousands of living creatures, of small dimensions it is true, but of singular beauty, both of form and structure, and often adorned with hues

> "Which make the rose's blush of beauty pale,
> And dim the rich geranium's scarlet blaze."

Even the pastoral melancholy of the green mountains is enlivened by the occurrence of many interesting species. One of the most beautiful of European coleopterous insects (*Carabus nitens*) occurs among the peat hags, and other places where heath and turf abound, and where its sparkling coat of gold and green, tinged with a brighter lustre than that of rubies, is singularly contrasted with the blackness of the soil in which it seems imbedded.—*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. *Entomology*.

THE SILK-WORM.

Had these insignificant secreting organs not existed in the silk-worm, or other allied species, what a difference of

character would have been manifested in the lustrous aspect of baronial halls, and even of the courts of kings! It is curious, indeed, to consider how the breeding of a few millions of caterpillars should occasion such a disparity at different times in the circumstances of different tribes of the human race. When the wife and empress of Aurelian was refused a garment of silk, on account of its extreme costliness, the most ordinary classes of the Chinese were clad in that material from top to toe; and although among ourselves week-day and holiday are now alike profaned by uncouth forms, whose vast circumference is clothed "in silk attire," yet our own James the Sixth was forced to borrow a pair of silken hose from the Earl of Mar, that his state and bearing might be more effective in the presence of the Ambassador of England,—"for ye would not, sure," said the royal pedant, "that your king should appear as a scrub among strangers."—*Encyclopædia Britannica,* Art. *Entomology.*

THE RED-BREAST.

The red-breast is perhaps the most beloved of British birds, and is remarkable for its combination of familiarity and independence. When left to its "own sweet will," it enters houses freely in cold or snowy weather, will perch night after night on corniced book-case, or seek repose

upon the golden scallop of a picture frame; but it hates all forwardness in others, and will not voluntarily come in contact with any hand, however beautiful. It hops delighted, singing as it goes with low and plaintive note, along the comfortable carpet, or, darting up suddenly towards the window-frame, will utter a louder gush of angrier melody on seeing some orange-breasted brother, perched on leafless spray, still braving the increasing darkness. For a time, just before nightfall, he seems himself to suffer from some uneasy instinct, or probably desires, from habit, to secure his usual perch in old fantastic yew or thick-screened holly; but, on second thoughts, he soon assumes some quiet corner, above the reach of curious children's hands. Not seldom, when the evening fire burns brightest, he descends on muffled wing, his large and liquid eye dilated less with fear than quiet wonder, and after a brief survey, he re-ascends his place of safety. Although this bird remains about our doors throughout the summer, building near out-houses and in orchards, yet

> "Some red-breasts love amid the deepest groves
> Retired to pass the summer days. Their song
> Among the birchen boughs, with sweetest fall
> Is warbled, pausing,—then resumed more sweet,
> More sad, that to an ear grown fanciful,
> The babes, the wood, the men, rise in review,
> And robin still repeats the tragic line."

We have a notion, that in Scotland the female red-breast

is migratory. At least, in the vicinity of Edinburgh, we recognise her not throughout the long-enduring winter.—*Encyclopædia Britannica,* Art. *Ornithology.*

THE HEN AND HER BROOD.

Who knows not (now divinely told) how the hen doth gather her brood beneath her wings; how she shelters them from the chill of the morning and the dews of night, expanding her downy breast and feathery pinions, till she becomes a populous tabernacle, a living temple of maternal love, beset with small protruding bills, and bright but gentle eyes; how she will dare, with upraised ruffled plumes, the fiercest onset of the direst foe:—the callous schoolboy with his threatening club, the snarling cur-dog with his ivory fangs, the insidious weasel, creeping so serpent-like through tangled herbage, or the bolder bird of prey, "lord of the lion heart and eagle eye," descending swift and sure like thunder-bolt from heaven. What are each or all of these in dread array, with death itself, to her, at other times a fearful creature, but now pervaded by the deep intensity of mother love!—*Illustrations of Scripture.*

WATERFALLS.

Another charming characteristic of Norway is the sparkling abundance of running waters,—its noble rivers and impressive falls forming, perhaps, the finest of its features. Our chief objection to waterfalls in our own country is, that during the summer season of research in that department they generally contain no water. The traveller may be inundated for many a moist and misty week among the mountains, but when he comes to some great rocky chasm famed for its cataract, he seldom sees anything but gray and ghastly crags, silent as death, or shedding a few sad tears in memory of more jovial (Jupiter pluvialis) days and nights gone by.

"The *sounding* cataract haunted him like a passion," is the great Laker's account of one who may have carried cascade-hunting to excess, and was morbidly affected thereby. If made the exclusive object of a journey, it seldom fails to produce disappointment, and the mind, keeping itself as it were shut up from other and far finer things which are beautiful upon the mountains and clothe the earth as with a garment, allows itself to be cheated by the indulgent expectancy of that deafening wonder. The cataract is also a very cold place for a pic-nic for any but a party of the most determined teetotallers, and even they frequently feel it too much for them, and sometimes

require to be actually carried home—such is the force and efficiency of strong waters. In a very sultry and elsewhere airless day, the undulations of the atmosphere, and the mist-like showers of broken spray, are most refreshing; but there is almost always a deficiency of good grassy slopes on which to lay ourselves out reposingly, like ancient Romans, and foolish young people are ever and anon making still more foolish old ones cry out screechingly, by "going too near the edge," or standing on picturesque perching places, where men and maidens love to congregate, "and dally with the wind and scorn the sun." We quite agree with Professor Forbes, that small waterfalls, unthought of till discovered by one's self, and enjoyed by not more than two at a time, are, on the whole, the best. You feel a pleasant and not unjustifiable pride in your position, and believe for the time that it is unknown to all the world but yourselves; and so those silvery streamlets, in their "innocent brightness," often convey a higher and more vivid sense of beauty, and produce a more pleasing impression, than do the awful and gigantic gorges where resound the dreadful voices of the sons of thunder. Now, Norway abounds in cataracts of every kind, beyond all calculation, and hence its charm. —*North British Review*, vol. xxi.

SIMPSON'S PERSUADER.

We have ourselves invented some of the best loch-trout flies now in use, although we don't desire to dwell much on that matter. It is a good, if not a great thing to be modest as well as meritorious; but we cannot refrain from here alluding to our latest and not least ingenious application of science to art, in the way of a ground-bait. This consists of a small pellet, used like a salmon-roe, with which it may be intermingled, and made of chloroform paste. We name it "Simpson's Persuader" in honour of an Edinburgh professor, who has successfully introduced the use of chloroform into other arts than those of angling. A trout no sooner takes one of these pellets into its mouth than it falls into a sweet sleep, and may be instantly drawn ashore and put to death without its knowing anything more about it. We expect a first-class medal from the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," and surely deserve it far more than do long-winded wearisome clergymen their £10 a-piece, for inflicting on their fellow-creatures the annual Gibsonian sermon on the subject.—*North British Review*, vol. viii.

THE DODO.

[One of Mr Wilson's most amusing papers appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January 1849. It was a

review of his friend Mr Strickland's work on "The Dodo and its Kindred." Amidst its pleasantry and waggishness, it abounds in information.]

What was the Dodo? when was the Dodo? where is the Dodo? are all questions, the first more especially, which it is fully more easy to ask than answer. Whoever has looked through books on natural history—for example, that noted but now scarce instructor of our early youth, the "Three Hundred Animals"—must have observed a somewhat ungainly creature, with a huge curved bill, a shortish neck, scarcely any wings, a plumy tuft upon the back—considerably on the off-side, though pretending to be a tail—and a very shapeless body, extraordinarily large and round about the hinder end. This anomalous animal being covered with feathers, and having, in addition to the other attributes above referred to, only two legs, has been, we think justly, regarded as a bird, and has accordingly been named the Dodo. But why it should be so named is another of the many mysterious questions which require to be considered in the history of this unaccountable creature. No one alleges, nor can we conceive it possible, that it claims kindred with either of the only two human beings we ever heard of who bore the name:—"And after him (Adino the Eznite) was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with

David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away." Our only other human Dodo belonged to the fair sex, and was the mother of the famous Zoroaster, who flourished in the days of Darius Hystaspes, and brought back the Persians to their ancient fire-worship, from the adoration of the twinkling stars. The name appears to have been dropped by both families, as if they were somewhat ashamed of it; and we feel assured that of such of our readers as admit that Zoroaster must have had a mother of some sort, very few really remember now-a-days that her name was Dodo. There were no baptismal registers in those times; or if such existed, they were doubtless consumed in the 'great fire'—a sort of periodical, it may be providential, mode of shortening the record, which seems to occur from time to time in all civilised countries.

RACES LATELY EXTINGUISHED.

Several local extinctions of elsewhere existing races are known to naturalists—such as those of the beaver, the bear, and the wolf, which no longer occur in Great Britain. Their extinction was slow and gradual, and resulted entirely from the inroads which the human race made upon their numbers. The beaver might have carried on business well enough, in his own quiet way, although

frequently incommoded by the love of peltry on the part of a hat-wearing people; but it is clear that no man with a small family and a few respectable farm-servants, could either permit a large and hungry wolf to be continually peeping at midnight through the key-hole of the nursery, or allow a brawny bruin to snuff too frequently under the kitchen door (after having hugged the watch-dog to death) when the servant-maids were at supper. The extirpation, then, of at least two of those quondam British species became a work of necessity and mercy, and might have been tolerated even on a Sunday between sermons—especially as naturalists have it still in their power to study the habits of similar wild beasts, by no means yet extinct, in the neighbouring countries of France and Germany.

But the death of the Dodo and its kindred is a more affecting fact, as involving the extinction of an entire race, root and branch, and proving that death is a law of the *species*, as well as of the individuals which compose it—although the life of the one is so much more prolonged than that of the other that we can seldom obtain any positive proof of its extinction, except by the observance of geological eras. Certain other still existing species, well known to naturalists, may be said to be, as it were, just hovering on the brink of destruction. One of the largest and most remarkable of herbivorous animals—a

species of wild cattle, the aurochs or European bison (*B. priscus*)—exists now only in the forest of Bialowicksa, from whence the Emperor of Russia has recently transmitted a living pair to the Zoological Society of London. Several kinds of birds are also evidently on their last legs. For example, a singular species of parrot (*Nestor productus*), with the termination of the upper mandible much attenuated, peculiar to Phipps's Island, near Norfolk Island, has recently ceased to exist there in the wild state, and is now known as a living species only from a few surviving specimens kept in cages, and which refuse to breed. The burrowing parrot from New Zealand is already on the road to ruin; and more than one species of that singular and wingless bird, called *Apteryx*, also from the last-named island, may be placed in the same category. Even in our own country, if the landed proprietors were to yield to the clamour of the Anti-Game-Law League, the red grouse or moor-game might cease to be, as they occur nowhere else on the known earth save in Britain and the Emerald Isle.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1849.

METALLIC LUSTRE IN ANIMALS.

We may here say a few words regarding the occurrence of this so-called metallic lustre throughout the general range of the animal kingdom, including therein that per-

pendicular biped—the lord of the creation. Many people are rich in gold and silver—and not a few abound in brass—but, notwithstanding the received name of "Copper Indians," no man, not even an American, has in his own proper person—and barring the buttons—a metallic lustre. Among the other tribes of the mammalia that lustre is extremely rare. At present we can recall only a single instance in which it is exhibited—that of the chrysochlore, or Cape mole, of which a portion of the fur is radiant with reflections of a green and copper colour. Throughout the ornithological kingdom this peculiar adornment is not unfrequent, as—"On the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." It is also very striking among some birds allied to the thrushes; is well known to invest a great portion of the peacock as in a kingly coat-of-mail; but is most sumptuously manifested among the many exquisite forms of the Trochilidæ. In the descending scale the next great class is that of fishes; and, truly, amid the great waters we behold the wonderful works of the Lord. When we consider the obscurity in which at a certain depth of ocean all things are enshrouded, it is surprising to perceive so much emblazoned lustre emerging from the sunless deep, where no human eye can ever behold its beauty. But so it is. There are few created things more resplendent than many of the southern fishes, among which all metallic splendour

is combined with the milder effulgence of the hues of flowers, the whole harmonising with a chaste fulness of effect which Titian and Rubens might envy, but could never equal. For what reason, it has been asked, has all this lavish adornment been bestowed on creatures which, as we suppose, can scarcely discern each other amid the dim perpetual twilight of the deep? "There are more things in *heaven* and *earth* than are dreamt of in our philosophy." Does not the same Shakspearian observation apply with equal truth to "the *waters* beneath the earth?"

Among the countless tribes of insects we have also innumerable examples of this bright effulgence in its highest state. The "Diamond Beetle" (*Entimus imperialis*) is richly inlaid with all precious gems; and many butterflies are emblazoned with gold and silver. No mention need be made of shells. Even among the still lowlier forms of worms or vermes (*Annelida*) we find the golden aphrodyte, a slug-like creature, partially covered by silky hair of bright metallic lustre, varying as the play of light falls on it through the wavering and translucent sea.—*Excelsior*, vol. ii.

FARMERS AND FISHERMEN.

"The weary ploughman plods his homeward way,"

but seldom fails to find it. The

"Swinked hedger at his supper sits,"

and soft is the mossy bank beneath him, and sweet the air around, redolent with the balmy breath of flowers, and filled with the melody of birds singing their evening hymn. How rarely does the extinction of life from other than natural causes overtake these dwellers on the land, compared with the frequent fate of those who do business in the great waters! How astounded would be the natives of our inland vales, and the shepherds on a thousand hills, if ever and anon their hitherto steadfast and enduring boundaries were rent by earthquakes, and, literally "adding field to field," one fine piece of pasture was lifted up and laid upon another, entombing for ever alike the corn and its cultivators, the shepherds and their sheep. No very pleasant greetings in the market-place would ensue among the grain-merchants, wool-growers, and cattle-dealers, when the morning's news might chance to be—that the Lammermoors had subsided 1500 feet, and were entirely under water; that "Eildon's triple height" had been turned over, peaks downmost; that the debris of Penicuik was scattered over the vestiges of Peebles; and that the good town of Dalkeith was lying (its fine body of militiamen fast fossilising) at the bottom of a coal-pit. Yet equally disastrous, though not quite similar, calamities not unfrequently befall those whose precarious lot it is to cultivate the sea.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, March 1856.

MARE MORTUUM.

There is another loch near these two (Loch Achilty and Loch Borley), which contains neither trout nor char, and as a fact of this kind is not at once instinctively discovered by the angler, and was not previously communicated to us, we fished it for half a day with more skill than success. Our movements were steadily watched the whole time by a south-country shepherd, who, rolled up in his plaid, his dog Yarrow close beside him, and both beneath the cosy shelter of a whin dyke, seemed curious to ascertain how long we would continue our attempt at sport. When at last, despairingly, we turned us homewards —a hospitable and most pleasing home was Mrs Scobie's —and neared our pastoral friends couched in their "sunny lair," the "human," without moving either head or heel, drawled out as follows :—"Ye 'll no hae killed mony trouts there?" "No, we 've had no sport at all." "Na, na, it 's weel kent there was never a trout in that loch frae the beginnin' o' the creation." He thus possessed the key to our discomfiture ; but from some unknown silential principle, on which we have since deeply pondered but failed to ascertain, he had declined, or at least delayed, to reveal the secrets of that dark abyss. However, we consoled ourselves with the "*experientia docet*" of Dr Ruddiman,

and philosophically repeated as we travelled across those breezy uplands—

> "Happy the man who, studying nature's laws,
> From known effects can trace the secret cause."
>
> —*The Rod and the Gun.*

EXAGGERATION.

We do not here desire to dwell upon that painful portion of the character of certain anglers—of whom the present reader is not one—which induces them to magnify their captures both in size and number. We have met with many men who never killed a trout under a pound weight, even by accident, and who never angle for an hour or two before breakfast or after lunch—this is their easy tooth-pick way of talking—without luring to destruction several dozens. We know that we dined lately in company—a person can't always choose his friend's companions—with one of these same boasters, who told the frequent tale of weight and number. Of the latter we were somewhat careless, but curious exceedingly about the former, because, for a special purpose, we were anxious to obtain that very night a well-sized trout. We asked if he had brought his finny captures home beneath the roof where we were then rejoicing?—the answer, "To be sure." Feeling ourselves at ease, and receiving an approving nod from our hospitable host—

himself a single-minded man, as full of truth as two eggs —we rang the bell, and desired an agreeable looking footman "to please to pick" from the different panniers a few of the largest trouts which had been captured during that blessed day. He speedily returned, bearing a splendid assiette of China's purest clay—our friend is rather proud of his eastern ware, and his old housekeeper knows that failing well—with slant-eyed Mandarins, their pipe in hand, small-footed damsels drinking from cups that cheer but not inebriate, bridges high in air, and swallows and summer-houses mingling together in the clouds; but for the "take of trouts," oh! what a falling-off was there, my countrymen! Where were the couple-of-pounders now? There were a few of three-quarters of a pound, (and pretty fish these same,) ascertained, however, by a red thread through their gills, to have been caught by a highly respectable and very round-faced clergyman of the Episcopal persuasion, who, silent though not unseen, was sipping some light summer tipple, and holding the long slender stalk of a rather large yet delicate thin-edged glass so neatly in his small white hand, that we had known for several hours he was an angler; thus proving how a naturalist, by the observance of a seemingly unimportant attribute of the outer man, may throw a flood of light upon his prevailing character and disposition. It did not appear, however, that the braggart himself could

identify with certainty a single parr, of which a few had been slily placed upon the platter by some observant valet down below, probably as a *memento* to him whose bark had been so much more powerful than his barb. Now, we give him due warning, that if he does not mend his manners, restrict his imagination, and study the specific weight, dimensions, and amount of the few small fishes he may chance to capture, we shall publish his name in the *Gazette*, with no delay and less remorse, as an ensample to all who cast a stain upon our innocent craft, by having thus

> "Foregone the home delight of constant truth,
> And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth."
>
> —*The Rod and the Gun.*

WALTONIAN MUSINGS.

Let all innocent amusements be sought after with assiduity and gladness, if in due subordination to more pressing or important duties; and especially, with never-ceasing reference to the great Giver of all earthly blessings, of which a tranquil and contented disposition is the chief. Let the angler in the midst of all his light amusement remember to what high and holy calling his ancient predecessors were promoted, and so walk

> "As ever in his great Taskmaster's eye,"

though casting not his nets by Galilean shore. When

the cheerful spring and all its glad remembrances rejoice his heart, let him forget not in redundant health, how many worthier far than he lie on a bed of sickness racked with pain, or with sinking spirits toil for daily bread—no murmuring stream within their downcast view, no freshening air around their throbbing temples. If summer heat o'ercomes him, and he rests, not undelighted, by gray romantic keep, or rustic bridge, or old umbrageous tree, let him remember while gazing on these frail memorials—in reference to his puny frame, how long enduring!—his immortal state, and think with solemn heartfelt awe upon that "shadow of a great rock," within which the weary and heavy laden rest for ever. If autumn's ruddy streams are roaring loud, let him not, as one rejoicing in his strength, trust to that strength alone, and so "surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh thee." When stormy winter has embroiled the sweet serenity of this green earth, and with "elemental strife" rages among icy crags and leafless trees, and the shepherd's hut and the lone mountain shieling lie buried beneath the drifting snows—then let the angler, with grateful if not with gladsome heart, acknowledge the blessings of his fireside comforts, the numerous home delights with which he is surrounded, the goodness and mercy which have followed him "all the days of his life." If he is the son of living parents, let him reverence their

gray hairs—the first commandment with promise. If, his quiver full of arrows, he be the fond father of many hopes, "provoke not your children to wrath," but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If childless, keep God's covenant, and He will give you a place and a name "better than of sons and of daughters." If master, "forbear threatening," knowing that there is no respect of persons in heaven. If servant, be obedient to your master, not with eye-service, but in singleness of heart—inasmuch as ye all know that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, "the same he shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."—*The Rod and the Gun.*

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LIST OF MR WILSON'S PUBLICATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS of ZOOLOGY; being Representations of New, Rare, or Remarkable Subjects of the Animal Kingdom, drawn and coloured after nature, with Historical and Descriptive Details. Folio, 1831.

ENTOMOLOGIA EDINENSIS; or a Description of the Insects found in the Neighbourhood of Edinburgh (*Coleoptera*). 1834. [This work was prepared conjointly by Mr Wilson and the Rev. James Duncan.]

The ROD and the GUN. 1840. ["The Gun" was written by the author of "The Oakleigh Shooting Code."]

A VOYAGE ROUND the COASTS of SCOTLAND and the ISLES. 2 vols. 1842.

ILLUSTRATIONS of SCRIPTURE. By an Animal Painter. With Notes by a Naturalist. 1855.

Besides these separate publications, to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* he contributed—

Angling.	Helminthology.
Animal Kingdom.	Ichthyology.
Animalcula.	Mammalia.
Entomology.	Ornithology.

Reptiles and Serpents.

To which must be added in the eighth edition—
Fisheries, and Edward Forbes.

As mentioned in the Memoir, he wrote for the "Edinburgh Cabinet Library," the Zoology of India, China, Africa, and the Northern Regions of North America.

For the *Quarterly Review* he wrote papers on

YARRELL'S BRITISH FISHES. April 1837. Vol. 58.

FORBES'S ALPS of SAVOY. 1844. Vol. 74.

In the *North British Review* he was the author of articles

On the ART of ANGLING. Vol. 8.

ANGLING in NORWAY. Vol. 9.

ST JOHN'S TOUR in SUTHERLANDSHIRE. Vol. 11.

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For *Blackwood's Magazine* he wrote—

On the KRAKEN. March 1818.

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To *Excelsior* he contributed a series of Papers on PARROTS, HUMMING BIRDS, and PIGEONS.

In the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, Nos. 5, 7, 8, 9, &c., appeared a series of Essays "ON THE ORIGIN AND NATURAL HISTORY OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS," viz. the Dog, the Horse, the Ox, the Sheep, the Goat, and the Hog.

The "Memoirs of the Wernerian Society" contain—

OBSERVATIONS on SOME SPECIES of the GENUS *FALCO* of LINNÆUS. (Read 1st Feb. 1817.) Vol. 2.

PHYSIOLOGICAL NOTICE concerning the EARLY STATE of the COMMON FROG. (Read 24th Jan. 1818.) Vol. 3.

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